

THE
BLESSEDNESS
OF THE
DEATH
OF THOSE THAT DIE IN THE
LORD.

and more especially in an evil Time; excellently discoursed in seven very searching, but very sweet SERMONS.

ON REV. CHAP. XIV. VER. 13.

Wherein several weighty Cases relating to Death in general, and to Dying in the LORD in particular, are succinctly, solidly and satisfyingly handled.

By Mr. JAMES DURHAM late Minister of the Gospel in GLASGOW.

Job xiv. 14. *All the Days of my appointed Time will I wait till my Change come.*

PSALM xc. 12. *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts to Wisdom.*

Nunc age quod moriturus agas.

GLASGOW:

Printed by JOHN HALL in the Middle of the
Salt-market, M. DCC. LVI.



* * * * *

To the very much honoured and virtuous
 Lady, Madam JEAN COCKBURN, Lady to
 the right honourable Sir ROBERT HEPBURN
 of *Keith Marshal* in *East-Lothian*, Knight.

M A D A M,

WHEN I was casting in my Thoughts, to
 whom I should address the Dedication of
 these few following Sermons, your Lady-
 ships self freely offered, being a Person to whom
 I am upon many Accounts singularly obliged, as I
 am likewise to your honourable Husband, having
 also had the Retirement and Conveniency not far
 from you, for revising and making them ready for
 the Press, which as you partly know, and as others
 may conjecture, was not so very easy a Piece of
 Work, considering that they were not taken from
 the Author's Pen, but from his Mouth when preach-
 ing, by one of his ordinary Hearers, no Scholar and
 afterwards transcribed by another of less Judgment:
 Your Ladyship being withal a genuine and unde-
 generate Daughter of the ancient, honourable, and
 loyal Family of *Ormistoun*, eminently instrumental
 in our beautiful & blessed, in our great and glorious
 Work of Reformation from *Popery*; and famous
 (as it is hoped it will through Grace still continue
 to be, if the like sad Occasion, as we wish it never
 may, should again occur) for ready and chearful
 receiving, harbouring, cherishing & encouraging
 the faithful Servants of God, and Martyrs of Jesus:
 Particularly of renowned Mr. *George Wishart*, who
 was thence taken under Trust by the unhappy Earl
 of *Bothwell*; now extinct and his Memorial with
 him (the mentioning whereof, I know your ho-
 nourable

honourable Husband Sir *Robert's* just regard for the reformed Protestant Religion, will easily persuade him to bear with, though he may be, for any thing I know, one of the neareſt Relations of that ſome-time great Nobleman ſurviving) while the Houſe of *Ormiftoun* ſtands and flouriſheth ſtill; which Mr. *Wiſhart*, I ſay, was taken thence, and thereafter moſt cruelly murdered at St. *Andrews*, the then Seat of Cardinal *Beaton*, who in great State and pompuous Pride looking out at the Window of his Caſtle there, now almoſt levelled with the Ground, ſed his luſtful Eyes with the horrid and pitiful, but to him pleaſant Spectacle of that eminent Saint and Servant of Jeſus Chriſt, his being burnt alive, and conſumed to Aſhes: The meaſure that Mr. *Patrick Hamiltoun* that noble Perſon, nobly deſcended, having been *b* Nephew by his Father to the Earl of *Arran*, and by the Mother to the Duke of *Albany* (no Blood being too noble or precious to be left by theſe Butchers, or to be ſuckt by theſe blood-thirſty Leeches, met with at the Hands of Arch-prelate *Beaton*, Uncle to the ſaid Cardinal, not many Years before in that ſame Place; O terrible, truculent and tragical Actings! yet ſuch as may be erected amongſt us if ever (as God forbid) the *Roman* Antichriſt that Scarlet coloured Beaſt, drunk with the Blood of the Saints and Martyrs of Jeſus ſhall again recover his Intereſt in theſe Kingdoms, now the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt.

But it may be ſome careleſs & unconcerned *Gal-
lios* will for ſilencing and ſatiſfying us, ſay, That theſe Things were done by Law; as we are told by a late petulant and prophane Pamphleteer, That all theſe horrid and hideous Perſecutions raiſed and proſecuted againſt many Proteſtants in the neighbouring Kingdom of *England*, in the ſhort
but

b See *Spotswood's Hiſt.* Page 12.

but very bloody Reign of Queen *Mary*, notwithstanding her solemn Profession made to the *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* Gentlemen, and in plain Council to the contrary, were according to Law; so that the Martyrs in her Days can no more be accounted such, than those who suffered by the late Popish plot; above 200 of whom, being in all but 277, according to his Reckoning (though he reckoneth amils) were, as he falsely and impiously alledgeth, executed as profligate Persons, speaking this malicious and grossly calumnious Lie, purely out of his own, in exact imitation of the Father of Lies: For famous Mr. *Fox*, that indefatigable laborious Searcher after all Occurents of that Nature gives no such Account; of whose Scrutiny in the Sufferings of Martyrs under Queen *Mary*, ingenuous and impartial Mr. *Fuller* speaking in his Ecclesiastical History, saith, This Point hath been handled already so curiously and copiously by Mr. *Fox*. that his Industry herein hath starved the Endeavours of such as shall succeed him, leaving nothing for their Pens and Pains to feed upon; for what can the man do, that cometh after the King, but that which hath been already done? Nothing. And Mr. *Fox* appearing sole Emperor in this Subject, all Posterities may despair to add any remarkable Discoveries which have escaped his Observation, wherefore to handle this Subject after him, is to light a Candle to the Sun; and further, according to his commendable Candor, he adds, as if he had been in designed Contradiction to this Detractor: (And now to take our Leaves of these Martyrs, what remains, but that we embrace and defend that Doctrine, which they sealed with their Lives, and as Occasion shall offer, to vindicate and defend their Memories from such scandalous Tongues & Pens which have or shall traduce them.) Neither doth Dr. *Burnet*, in his late History of the Reformation of the Church of *England*, give us any

such account: Nay, neither *Speed* nor *Baker*, whom he most injuriously voucheth for his Authors of his Calumny, hint any such Thing, but the Man hath forgotten, or would not remember, that there hath been, may be, and still are in the World, Thrones of Iniquity that establish Mischief by a Law, where-with God the great Lawgiver hath no Fellowship: And that the primitive Christian Martyrs, who were most cruelly put to Death by the persecuting Pagan *Roman* Emperors, particularly by *Trajan*, *Hadrian*, the *Antonins*, and *Severus*, were so dealt with by them, according to the then Laws of the *Roman* Empire; for which Reason it is very probable that *John* the Divine in the Revelation brings in some of these Persecutors with a pair of Balances in their hands, insinuating thereby, that they pretend to weigh and measure out their Persecutions of Christians by exact Justice according to Law: Who are therefore no more to be accounted Martyrs; nay, all that have suffered most exquisite Torments, and cruel Deaths on account of the Protestant Religion, not only in *Scotland* and *England*, but in *France*, *Germany*, the Low-Countrys, and elsewhere, since the Beginning of the Reformation, & our forsaking the apostate Church of *Rome*; and in *Tholouse*, *Bohemia*, the Valleys of *Piedimont*, and in other Parts of the Christian World before that Time, for that very same Religion, tho not under the Denomination of Protestant, must needs, according to the new Doctrine of that pretended Protestant Author, be dashed out of the Roll and Catalogue of the Martyrs of Jesus Christ; because forsooth they are generally put to Death, by and according to the Laws of the respective Countrys wherein they suffered, though these human Laws were framed on the Matter in contempt and defiance of Divine Laws to the contrary. And yet we need neither wonder, nor
strange

strange to find this Man basely belpattring, as so many profligates, the Protestants who suffered in Queen *Mary's* Days, & ranking them in the same Category, and setting them near by one and the same Level with the Papists, that were lately executed for their Accession to the horrid and hellish Plot, and denying the former to have been Martyrs more than the latter; who roundly and boldly in Face of the reformed Churches dare assert, that all the difference between the Popish and the Protestant Religion, is in Modes and Circumstances, and no more in reality; and that the Laws which established the Protestant, and abolished the Popish Religion, cannot be otherwise altered but by an equal Power with that from whence they had their Being, King & Parliament, who by agreeing no more pre-judge the publick in order to Heaven, than they did before, that being only accidental, not extrinsecal to the Substance of Religion, by which alone, and not by Forms and Ceremonies Men are, saved. What, are there no material and highly momentuous doctrinal Difference betwixt Protestants and Papists? as about the Pope his arrogantly claimed and usurped universal, Civil and Ecclesiastical Supremacy, whereby he takes upon him to transfer Kingdoms, to depole Kings and Emperors, and to loole Subjects from their sworn Allegiances to them; to interdict as to all sacreds, and on the Matter to excommunicate, not only particular Persons, the greatest crowned Heads not excepted, but whole Christian Kingdoms at his Pleasure, none being warranted to lay, What, or why dost thou? And all this as Christ's Vicar on earth, whereas indeed he is the Arch-enemy of Christ, even that Antichrist, to whom all his Characters assigned by the Apostles, *Paul* and *John* do most exactly and punctually agree. About his fondly fancied Infallibility, Times and Ways out of Number, to

the Conviction of the World, not only infallibilized but grossly falsified and belied; as for instance undeniably appears in a Matter of very great Moment *to wit*, the different Translation of the old vulgar Latin Bible by Pope *Sixtus* the fifth, and by Pope *Clement* the eight, some three Years only intervening betwixt the one and the other; each of which Translations is in the Preface or Bull thereto prefixed, declared to be authentick and obligatory of the whole Chrillian World to own the same as such, the printing or publishing of any other Translation being under the pain of the greater Excommunication, severely discharged; and yet these two Translations are not only in a multitude of Places, upward of a Thousand, different the one from the other; so that the Pope's Infallibility doth infallibly prove fallible and falls down flat; for if the one of these Translations be infallibly true, then the other must needs be infallibly false; or if they should still say, which it seems they cannot have the Effrontery to do, that they are both infallibly true, then their Popes will not only be made infallible, but (if it did not involve a blasphemous repugnancy) super-omnipotent, by attributing to them a Power to make, most really, plainly & palpably contradictory propositions true at once; So that we need not henceforth wonder that their Canon Law stileth the Pope, *Our Lord God the Pope*. Besides that several of their pretended infallible Popes have by the published Confessions of their own Writers been found respectively guilty of professed Heresy, Simony, Perjury Adultery, Sodomy, Necromancy, Sacrificing to Idols and Devils, and of other most vile and abominable villanies; yea, their great Cham-
pion

c See Mr. Thomas James, his Bellum Papale, and his Defence thereof.

pion *Baronius* at the Year 897, expressly saith, That for the Space of an hundred and fifty Years together, the Popes were rather Apostates than Apostolicks, and that they were thrust into the Papal Chair by the Power of Harlots, & by the Violence of the prince of *Tuscany*: Which sandy Foundation of alledged Infallibility being overturned, all the rotten and tottering Superstructure of this false Doctrine reared up thereon, as so many Castles of Come-down, must needs fall to the Ground. Indeed it is a wonder that any rational Man should have the confidence to own such a Fancy, but a greater Wonder that any professing himself to be a Christian, should make it a grand Article of his Belief, and a Basis of the eternal Salvation, of his immortal Soul: Alas! 'tis to be feared that an evil Conscience, cauterized, and some Disposition to Atheism are with many the great Inductives to it: About the Authority of the sacred Scriptures, which they will have wholly as to us to depend upon the Authority of the Church, that is to say, at the Bottom of the Pope, blasphemously alledging, That the Authority of the Pope is above the Authority of the Scriptures, that no Book, nay, nor Chapter in the whole Bible, is to be held for canonical, without the Pope's Authority, and that the Authority of the scriptures is no more to be valued than *Æsop's* Fables, *d* unless it were for the Testimony of their Church.

And about the Perfection and Perspicuity thereof in all Things necessary to Salvation, which they endeavour to disgrace, by the impious imputations of imperfection & obscurity, calling them a black Gospel, inken Divinity & a Nose of Wax. *e* About

A 5

the

d See Phigius de Hier. Eccl. lib. Chap. 2. Pierius his Dialogues against Luther. See Greg. 7. Dict. in Con. Rom. See Hermanus. *e* See Phigius *ibid.* 3. Chap. 3.

the Necessity of unwritten Traditions in Matters of Faith, as proceeding from the same divine Authority, and to be received with the same divine Belief, and under the same Pain of divine Wrath and Damnation, that the divinely and infallibly inspired Scriptures are: For the Council, or rather causelessly cursing conventicle at *Trent*, saith, That they are received with the same Reverence. About the unwarrantableness of translating the Scriptures into vulgar Languages, and of the Peoples reading of them in Point blank Contradiction to the Scriptures themselves; and what ever be pretended, mainly intended to keep them still in gross ignorance of Divine Scripture Truths, and in utter incapacity to discover, detect, and abandon their abominable Errors? And how dare the People presume to read the Scripture; since his Holiness, Pope *Innocent* bellowed out like a Beast in this fine infallible interpretation of that Scripture against the Beasts not touching the Mountain wherein the Law was given: *a* This Mountain, saith he, which must not be touched by the Beast, is the high & holy Scriptures, which the unlearned must not read. And their Doctors commonly affirm, That the People must not be suffered to read the Scriptures, because forsooth, we must not give holy Things to Dogs, and cast Pearls before Swine; Such Account make these Pastors of the People, as to rank them among Beasts, even the vilest of them, Dogs and Swine; which saith, Such Pastors are fitter to feed and keep Dogs and Swine, than to feed and watch over rational Men & Women that have immortal Souls: And one of them, *Alphonsus de Castro*, asserts, That from the reading of the Scriptures all Heresies do come; though this hath been ordinarily more through the Fault of learned Men than of the common People; and in neither
through

a See Phigius, *ibid.* lib. 3. Chap. 3.

through any Fault of the Scriptures. They are so mad angry at the Translations of the Bible into vulgar Languages, that some of them have boldly belched out this Blasphemy, That People being permitted to read the Bible was the invention of the Devil. *b* There is an *English* Pamphlet, printed Anno, 1663, intituled, *The Reconciler of Religion*, that hath these horrible Words, Page 41. ---- The Protestant Bible is no more the Word of God, than is the *Alcorn* or *Aesop's* Fables; it is a diabolical invention, & sacrilegious Instrument to deceive and damn all such poor Souls as believe it, & therefore worthy to be burnt with Fire in the middle of the Market-place at Noon, and let all the People say, *Amen*, so be it.

About Justification by Works, & inherent Righteousness and not by the imputed Righteousness of Christ; whereby Sinners have Accels to boast and glory, as being made their own immediate Saviours, and to offer a false Sacrifice which God will never accept of, to the great Dishonour of the alone Saviour Jesus Christ. About the possibility of not performing the Law perfectly in this Life, though the whole Scriptures, the universal Experience of all Ages, and Men's own Consciences reclaiming, but of out-doing the Law, and doing more than it requireth, or obligeth Men unto, by their works of Supererogation, whereby they think to oblige God and to merit from him, not only for themselves, but for others also, and whereby they will needs have the righteousness of one supererogating Saint to be imputed to other Persons, and hold this for a very real Truth, while in the mean Time they flout at the imputation of Christ's Merits and Righteousness, as but a putative and merely imaginary Thing, so great is the Strength of judicially insatuating Delusion. About antisciptural, irrational, nonsensical & monstrous Transubstantiation, whereby

whereby they will have the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist turned, and that by the Priest, when and as often as he pleaseth, into the very Body and Blood of Christ, and so will have him, whom the Heavens must receive or contain till the Restitution of all Things, to be corporally or bodily present therein, and that in a thousand of Places at once, as to his whole Body; and so to be chewed with the Teeth, digested into the Stomach, & sent forth into the Draught of the profanest Wretches that participate of that Sacrament; yea, it may be, to be eaten by Mice and Rats, terrible to be once but thought of. And their abominable unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass, offered daily for the Sins of the living, & of the dead, highly derogatory unto that one propitiatory & Justice-attoning bloody Sacrifice, offered up once for all unto God by Jesus Christ the great high Priest on the golden Altar of his divine Nature, by which Sacrifice he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. About the Sacraments conferring Grace on such as receive them by the very Deed done; and the Necessity of a right Intention in the Administrator of them, not only as to the Fruit & Effect, but as to the Validity & very Being of them; whereby not only their *Opus operatum* is overturned, but most Things in Popery as such, namely their Transubstantiation, & Sacrifice of the Mass, nay, the very Papacy itself (as some of their own noted Writers seem to be convinced x) are rendred utterly uncertain, and in

x See Puteanus who in 22. q. 1. Art. 6. teacheth, That it is not absolutely of Faith, that the existing Pope (v. g.) Paul the 5th is the true Vicar of Christ, and Successor of Peter, because it suppones two Propositions, Paul is baptised (N. B.) and Paul is canonically elected; neither of which is absolutely of Faith.

in Truth nothing less certain among them but this, that there is an Uncertainty of most, if not of all Things. About their half Communion, whereby their most furious & foolish Reasons, such as their fear lest some of the Wine, or Blood as they call it, should remain on the Laicks Beards or Moustachoes, they sacrilegiously rob the People of the Cup, most expressly contrary to Christ's Allowance thereof on them in the divine unalterable Institution of that most precious Ordinance, appointed for the spiritual Nourishment of his People. And the absolute Necessity of Baptism in order to Salvation; whereby all the Christians of them who believe no other Place that Souls departed go to after Death but Heaven or Hell, are for the mere want thereof, though neither neglected nor contemned by the Parents (for of such contempt or neglect the Infants themselves are incapable) are most cruelly damned to Hell-fire for ever. About Purgatory, a mere Fable & figment, but indeed a very serviceable Fire for the Pope's Kitchen, whereby the alone purely and perfectly purging Virtue of Christ's precious Blood is mightily disparaged. And about the Pope's Pardons and Indulgences (or rather Emulgences or Purse-milking & emptying Devices) offered to all who will give Money for them on their saying of so many Ave-Marys and Pater-nosters, and doing other such poor childish and foolish Feats; and manifest of them that give most Money, but utterly denying to those wretched Souls that have nothing to give. About their praying publicly in the Church, in a Language utterly unknown to the Generality of the common People; whereby he that should be their Mouth to God is a Barbarian to them, and they incapacitate to join with him understandingly, or to give their assent to what he prays; in plain and palpable Contradiction to what is most clearly, and convincingly

discoursed

discourſed in the Scripture to this Purpoſe. About praying to Angels or Saints departed, not without deep & diſhonourable Reflections on the Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt our alone Mediator. And about praying for the Dead, who are by Death put into an eternal & unalterable State, and ſo quite without the Reach & Benefit of the Prayers of the Living. About worſhipping of Images with divine & religious Worſhip, which if any of them for Shame ſhould deny, their angelick Doctor *Thomas of Aquina* will give them the Lie, who expreſſly ſays, That the ſame Reverence is given to the Image of Chriſt, which is given to himſelf, & becauſe Chriſt is worſhipped by the Worſhip *Latria*, which is the higheſt Worſhip, his Image therefore is to be worſhipped with the ſame Worſhip *Latria*, he affirmeth the ſame Worſhip given to the Croſs of Chriſt, or to the Crucifix, of whatever matter it be made. And on the matter about the obligation of the ſecond Command, which becauſe it cannot be bowed or bended, no, not by the Plentitude of the Pope's Power; to patronize, nor in the leaſt to favour their groſſy idolatrous Image-worſhip, they will needs not only break it, but daſh it quite out of the Decalogue in deſpite of the great Law-giver, who hath ſo vexed & confounded them by this Command, that they cannot evite the Dint of it; & hath involved them into ſuch a Labyrinth, that they cannot extricate nor bring themſelves out of it, no not by the Clew of the ſmalleſt ſpun Threed of their moſt ſubtile Diſtinctions. About the Apoſtacy of the Saints, and the Uncertainty of their Salvation, the very Cut-throats of the Comfort that is allowed by Jeſus Chriſt on them that unfeignedly believe in him; & about many moe weighty Things. Are all theſe but Ceremonies and Circumſtances in Religion? Can the the Man be ſo groſſy ignorant as to think

so, or so wickedly prejudicate to say so, when he thinks otherwise! Are all the very substantial Differences betwixt Protestantism and Popery thus dwindled away into mere Modes & Circumstances, Forms and Ceremonies? And shall we look on the great Multitudes of Protestants, who on the sole Account of their Religion, have been put to so many various exquisite torments, & most cruel deaths, as a Company of silly, shallow-pated Kidicules, who knew not how to distinguish betwixt the Substance and the mere Modes and Circumstances of Religion, wherein the Substance of it was not at all concerned, nor so much as trench'd upon, or touch'd? God forbid that we should dare, especially at so high a Rate, to offend against, and condemn the Generation of these righteous Persons, who overcame by the Blood of the Lamb, by the Word of the Testimony, and by not loving their Lives unto the Death, or suffer ourselves to be wheedled into such a sinister and perverse Belief of these Witnesses and Worthies of whom the World was not worthy, & that upon the bare and unprov'd Assertions of this Truckler and Trafficker of *Rome*; who (yet if we trust him) never was, nor is like to be addicted to Popery, he is not sure but he may be, and who, I pray, that is not over credulous, will believe him, or any other Man of his Kidney, that looks on all Differences betwixt Protestants and Papists, as Matters of mere Mode, Circumstance and Ceremony, but that he will be easily prevail'd with to forgo the one, and to embrace the other Religion, both being in his Account the very same for Substance; if especially by the change, he may come to a little more Substance in the World?

However, since such industrious Endeavours are used to disparage, disgrace and vilify Sufferers and Martyrs for the Protestant Religion, and to make
little

little and light of all the great and weighty Differences betwixt Protestantism and Popery; it should alarm, as with the Sound of a Trumpet, our Land, all sound and upright hearted Protestants in *Scotland*, to rouse ourselves, and by all suitable sinless and warrantable Ways earnestly to contend for the reformed Protestant Religion, the very Faith once for all delivered by Jesus Christ and his Apostles to Saints, (I say the very Faith so delivered, because we reformed Protestants heartily own all the Doctrine of Faith contained in the sacred Scriptures, and own nothing as necessary to be believed or practised in order to Salvation, that is not contained there, either in express Words, or that is not deducible therefrom by genuine, unconstrained and necessary Consequence) that hath been signally sealed from Heaven by the Conversion, Edification and Salvation of Multitudes of Souls; that hath been confirmed by the Sufferings and Deaths of many thousands of martyrs through the World, and of not a few in these Kingdoms, that Faith for which our noble and renowned Ancestors did so strenuously strive and wrestle by all lawful Means and Ways that the same might be handed down to our Trust and Custody, as a most precious Depositum, obliging us under all highest Pains, even of his eternal Wrath and Curse, that we endeavour to transmit the same intire and untainted to them that shall come after us. And that Faith which we are by solemn Engagements, (taken on before God and the World) indispensibly obliged to maintain, profess, avouch and bear Testimony unto, at any Rate or Hazard as we are called to it: It being indeed the true Glory of a Testimony, to give it when God calls for it in the Face of Danger.

Let us therefore be prevailed with and persuaded by all these and other such Considerations, earnestly

ly to contend for the Faith, and to stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, that we be not again entangled with the Yoke of Antichristian Bondage. And that we may thro Grace be the better disposed and capacitate to do so, we would endeavour, 1. Thorowly to know, and to be well acquainted with the Principles of Religion which we profess, that we may be able and ready always with Meekness and Fear, to answer one that asketh us a Reason of our Ground and Hope; even to have our Loins girt about with the Truth. 2. We would seek to be fully assured and persuaded of the infallible Truth and divine Authority of the sacred Scriptures; wherein our Religion is contained, and that from the inward Work of the Spirit of God bearing Testimony thereof unto our Spirits according to the Scriptures. 3. We would yet more than ever endeavour to receive the Love of the Truth, or to receive the Truth in Love, for the Neglect whereof many have been, and more if God prevent not, will be given up to strong Delusions to believe Lies. 4. We would covet earnestly to feel the Power yet more and more of our Religion upon our Hearts, captivating us to Obedience, & mightily influencing our Practice to an universal exact conformity to it, that no Part nor Point of the Truth may be detained in unrighteousness, nor made as it were a Prisoner of, by setting a guard of corrupt affections about it, not suffering it to look out, and shew itself in our Practice. 5. We would study to be, and abide near God, not only to make sure on good Grounds, that we who were sometimes far off are now made nigh, through the Blood of Christ's Cross as to our state, but by all appointed Means to endeavour to draw nigh as to our Frame, Disposition and Walk, (for though it be impossible that there can be any drawing nigh to God in respect of
Frame,

Frame, where the Distance of State remaineth still, yet there may be, as many doleful Experiences of the Saints put beyond all Reach or Debate, great Distance of Disposition and Frame, where there is Nearness of State) that we may hear this to be the unanimous Voice of all the occurring Providences of these Days, that 'tis good for us that we draw nigh to God; It was sure always good, but never better; always necessary, but never more necessary than at such a Time, wherein Distance from God, usually attended with Darknels and Deadne's, is singularly dangerous, and portends sadly. 5. We would endeavour to have the Honour and Glory of Jesus Christ, much endeared to our Hearts: To have and to keep up a high and superlative Esteem of him, as transcendently and incomparably precious, and of the Worth and Excellency of our Religion, as coming from him, as conforming us to his Image, & as disposing & fitting us for the Enjoyment of him; that in comparison of the Excellency of the Knowledge of him, by and according to Scripture-Religion, which we profess, all Things in this World, Pleasure, Profit & Honour, may in our Esteem be disregarded, and detrued into the very lowest Degree of Baseness and Vilene's, even to be accounted as Lo's and Dung, which will notably predispose to part with, forgo & actually to suffer the lo's of them, when any of them, or all of them together shall presume to compare or come in competition with the Excellency of Jesus Christ, & of the Christian reformed Protestant Religion. This is a Time, wherein all the Lovers of Christ, and of their Religion amongst us, are in a special Manner called to have such a low Esteem of all these Things in this Competition, to cry down the Market and to let the Prices of them fall, to sit very loose of them, to be very denied to them, and to be ready on a call to let them go, when we cannot brook them and Christ, and our Religion together. 7. We would

would set ourselves down with greater and more grave Deliberation than ever, to count what Christ and our Religion may cost us; and to this Purpose we would cast up (to say so) the King's Book of Rates, the Book of the holy Scriptures, that there we may see what all the Followers of Christ are most expressly called to lay their Reckoning with the Loss of, for his and the Gospel's sake, and what Christ, and the very same Religion which we profess, hath cost many of the Saints recorded there: We would also review, as we have access, human Writings concerning the many various, great and grievous Losses & Sufferings of the Martyrs of Jesus, for him and for our Religion, that we may thence further see what they have been put to expend on that noble and nonsuch Account, who yet all reckoned their greatell expence and cost, infinitely below the Worth of the Cause for which they were put to it: We have generally hitherto, & that for a considerable Time, held and possessed our Religion at mighty easy and cheap Rates, it hath cost us but very little: It may be, yea it is probable, that the Rates will be raised, that the Market will be up; which calls aloud on us to sit down seriously and soberly, and count the cost, whether we will be able to finish & go through with our undertaking, and that thorow the Neglect & Defect of such previous deliberate Reckoning, we be not with the surprising and unexpected charge and cost, put to give over in the midst of our Work, and so expose ourselves to be the Objects of the scorn and Derision of all observing Passers-by. 8. We would believably take Christ's Bond and Obligation for his gracious & free compensing of all losses that shall be honestly undergone for his & the Gospel's sake, even an hundred-fold in this present Time, as to that which is infinitely better than that which is lost; & life eternal in the World to come, with the comfortable Clause, *Non obstante persecutione*, with, or

notwithstanding of Persecution, and to shew that he is not complementing sincere Sufferers for his sake, by giving them this Bond for making up their losses, nor putting an empty spoon into their mouth, but speaking his very Heart to them, he hath ordered the recording or registering of it by three of his Evangelists, and in every Draught of it (which is worthy Observation) he hath prefixed a grave Asseveration, Verily: O highly valid, good and sufficient Security given with such Sincerity by so infinitely responsal a Person, whom God hath trusted as a great Surety and Cautioner for the Debt and Duty of all the Elect, who can never break or be unable to pay the Debt; and who is willing his People should believingly, prayerfully, and humbly sue him in the Court of Heaven for implement of his Bond of Compensation, and will never refuse the Debt, nor will he suffer his Bond to be untaken up, nor will he take it up till he hath completely payed all that he hath most freely become Debtor for by his Bond and Obligation; and when that shall be done, then sure all losses for Christ and the Gospel, for true Religion's sake, shall be fully, superabundantly & in infinite overplus made up.

M A D A M,

I am the more encouraged to address the Dedication of these few Sermons on this sweet, serious & savoury Subject to your Ladyship, that I know you read them concernedly, as well as your honourable Husband Sir *Robert* did, as being through Grace, more immediately contributive towards his Excitement and up-stirring to make ready for his quickly approaching Dissolution, walking now betwixt three score and ten, and four score Years, the utmost ordinary Boundary fixed by God in these last Ages of the World, for the continuance of the short life of Man. I know he readeth much, would to God that all the Gentlemen in *Scotland*, old and

young, gave themselves as much when not otherwise necessarily and suitably avoked, to reading of profitable and edifying Books as he doth; they might through his Blessing be much more accomplished both Men and Christians, and a great deal more fitted to serve their Generation, according to the Will of God, in their respective Capacities and Stations. That you both may be helped of God to love more and more, so as you may have the well grounded, lively & soul-refreshing Hope *of dying the blessed Death of them that die in the Lord, who rest from their Labours, and whose Works follow them,* is the very serious Desire of,

M A D A M,

Your Ladyship's very much obliged

Servant and hearty Well-wisher

in our LORD.

J. C.

T O

July,
1689.

TO THE
CHRISTIAN
READER.

Christian Reader,

MANY and various are the Vicissitudes and Changes to which Sin hath sadly subjected us, poor, transient, itinerary, miserable Mortals, grieving, groaning, dwindling and decaying Nothings, the Reward of all which Changes is at Length brought up by Death, that last great and vastly momentuous Change, which puts a final Period to all the Changes that shall ever befall us in this World; and whereby every one of us without Exception of Sex, Age, Descent, Degree, Calling, or Capacity, will be put into an eternal, unchangeable State of Happiness, or of Misery: If so, then sure it is very sad, and never enough to be lamented if it were with Tears of Blood, that Men and Women who have rational and immortal Souls, endued with a discursing Faculty, and capable of eternal Happiness in the Enjoyment of God, and of eternal Misery, in Separation and Destruction from his Presence should for most Part so much abstract from the serious Thoughts of that most important Change followed with so long a Train of everlasting concernin

cerning Consequents, and in their retired Meditations, take so few Turns in this long Gallery of Eternity: As if all that the divinely inspired Scriptures say of it, and that many every Day experience the Truth of, were a mere Romance, or cunningly devised Fable; And yet notwithstanding Death is most incontrovertably certain, all Men being by divine Appointment, concluded under a Necessity of dying; which Appointment taketh in not only the infallable Certainty of the Thing, but the Determination of the precise Time when, of the Place where, and the Manner how; whether by a violent or natural Death, whether by a more sudden and surprising, or by a more lent and lingering Death. *For our Times are in the Hand of the Lord*, the Years, Months, Weeks, Days and Moments of them, with their incident Changes and Revolutions are at his dispose. There is an appointed Time to Man on Earth, he hath determined the Times before appointed; The Times and Seasons are kept in the Father's own Power; our Days are determined, the Number of our Months is with him, he hath set Bounds to us which we cannot transgress: There is no possibility of circumducing the Day prefixed to the Continuance of our Life by his Appointment (which is not at all gainsaid by what the Psalmist saith of bloody and deceitful Men) that they shall not half, or live out half their Days, that is, they shall often not live half nor near so long as they might according to the ordinary Course of Nature, or
not

not half, nor near so long as they desired, designed and expected, or they shall be cut off in the Throng of their Business, and in the Midst of their Project and Designs; nor by that Sentence of Death, of a Disease mortal in its own Nature, denounced against King *Hezekiah*, and the Addition of fifteen Years to his Life, which imports only the Change and Reverse of a tacitly conditional Commination, and Sentence (as in that against the *Ninivites*, and that against *Abimelech* in the Matter of *Sarah*) but no Change at all of God's Purpose and Decree, who is not as Men that he should repent, whose Counsel stands, and *with whom there is no Variableness nor Shadow of Turning*, who had decreed in his eternal Purpose the drawing forth of *Hezekiah's* Life that Length, and had by his Decree infallibly insured the Performance of the Condition, to wit, *Hezekiah's* praying, humbling himself, and rousing up of himself yet more to the serious Exercise of Godliness, and his using prescribed Means for the recovery of his Health; nor is it gainsaid by any other Scripture rightly understood. So that it seems to be (to say no worse) Atheologick, and nothing consentient to divine Scripture Dictates, positively and peremptorily to deny, that the utmost Term and Period of this mortal Life is unalterably fixed in the eternal Purpose of God: It being very unreasonable to substract or exempt from so concerning and important a Thing, as the last of Man's Life, or the precise Time of his Death, which in the Scripture

ture

ture is by Way of Eminency above and beyond all other Changes called his Change, even that whereby he stept over the Border of Time into Eternity, from the sovereign Influence of his Decree and of his Providence that doth most vigilantly and accurately inspect the infructable Execution thereof; since they reach the least momentuous and most minute Things, even the numbering of our hairs, and the falling of a Sparrow to the Ground. Beside whatever is, or can be said of this, seems with equal Strength to militate against the immutability of the Divine Purposes and Decrees about the everlasting State of Man, and to infer as great an Uncertainty of the latter, as of the former. And indeed it is worthy Observation, that those who most violently maintain (I say most violently, because I know there are some otherwise Orthodox, who demur in this) that the Term of human Life is unfixed, mutable and ambulatory, even in the eternal Decree and Foreknowledge of God, as well as it is contingent and uncertain in respect of natural and second causes, do also patronize and peremptorily plead for the Mutability and Conditionality (for both come to the same Account of God's Decrees) about Men's everlasting and spiritual Estate, making him either to acquire new Knowledge, tho known to him be all his Works from the Beginning, or at least to be doubtful and irresolved in his Purposes, till new Emergements arising from an uncontroled and self governing Free-will, cause him take new Measures and Resolutions: Which is a Doc-

trine justly exploded by all true orthodox Divines, as being unworthy of, and injurious to the wise absolute and supreme Government of the World; and as having a Tendency (however it may be honested and plaistered over with specious and splendid pretences of somewhat else) to narrow and limit the Sovereign Dominion, and Will of the infinite Majesty of God the Creator, that the Will of the finite and seckless Creatures may have the greater Scope and Latitude of Liberty; which yet is no Liberty indeed, nor worthy of the Name of liberty; because it is not that wherewith the Son of God makes free; and to take the Crown of the Glory of the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners off the head of free Grace, and to set it most sacrilegiously on the Head of their own Lord paramount Free-will; and in downright Contradiction to the Scriptures of Truth, to make poor Man proudly boast, that it is not God, but he himself, who hath made him to differ from others; and that he is more obliged in the Matter of his Conversion and Salvation, to his own toward, tractable, gentle, courteous, compliant and obsequious Free will, than to God's decree of Election, and the efficacious, omnipotently sweet, and sweetly omnipotent, infallibly and necessarily Will inclining and determining, though not forcibly, violently, or compulsorily coasting Influence of sovereign Free-grace: If wantonly curious, superciliously ignorant, tumultuantly mutinous, corrupt human Reason; ambitiously affecting
to

to take up and comprehend the great Abyſſe, the ſhoreleſs, bottomleſs and incomprehenſible Ocean of the Decrees and Providence of God within its own little and ſhallow Cockle-shell Capacity) would ſuffer itſelf to be ſobered and be calm'd and humbled into a juſt Conſideration of Things, all theſe high and haughty Reasonings and Debatings againſt the unalterable fixedneſs of the laſt Term of Man's natural Life, and againſt the immutability of his Decrees in reference to their ſpiritual and everlaſting State, would quickly be let fall: For then it would eaſily ſee the great Congruity, and pleaſing Suitableneſs that is in ſubjecting all, and particularly the rational Creatures, being but derivated and borrowed Bits of Being from that firſt Fountain and Original of Being, that Being of Beings, in all the Events that befall them, and in all their Motions, Actings and Operations, according to their reſpective Natures, entitatively, morally or graciously good; and all the adherent Anomies, Ataxies and Vitiouſities of them; to the Majeſty of the moſt High God, as to his efficient producing of the one, and to his permitting, bounding, ordering and directing of the other, to his own holy, and bleſſed Ends; without being juſtly chargeable with any the leſt culpable Acceſſion to them; who is by the moſt abſolute Perfection of his pureſt Nature, infinitely removed from all Poſſibility of being reached by any Tincture or Touch of Pollution.

It would also see clearly the most profoundly and admirably wise Connection, that in these Decrees of God, and in the Execution of them by his all Eye-providence, is ordered betwixt the Ends & all the several Middles leading there-to; it being evident beyond all Hazard of irrational Contradiction, that the Boundary of the Life of *Ahab*, and of the unbelieving *Samaritan* Lord who was trode to Death in the Gate of *Samarina*, and of our blessed LORD JESUS himself, was determinately prefixed, since it was expressly foretold, as the Scripture clears; and it is simply impossible that divine Predictions can prove false; and yet the Man that shot at *Ahab* acted freely in so doing: Those who trampled that Lord to Death, were not forced by any to gather themselves together in such a Croud, or to be so regardless of a Person of Honour; and the Murderers of CHRIST were not a whit the less guilty, that they did nothing but what God's Hand and Counsel determined before to be done, nor yet did our LORD any Thing that was irrational and foolish in using lawful and fit Means for his Preservation, in so frequent retiring and hiding himself from the *Jews* Violence as he did, though as the Scripture oft makes mention, *His Hour was not yet come*, by which Instance it is very clear, that the Determinateness of the Decrees of God doth no Ways violate or infringe the negative Freedom of the Will of Men, nor yet is it any excuse for their Sin, or Encouragement to their neglect of Means, since it is by the using rightly, or neglecting these that God causeth

seth his unalterable Decrees to take their designed Effect.

As then it is most undoubtedly certain that we must die, so the Time for the Continuance of our Life and Days here, is very short, even but as an Hand-breath, & our Age as nothing before him, our Days are spent as a Tale that is told, they are as a Shadow on the Earth, and there is none abiding; they are swifter than a Post, they fly away and see no good, they are passed away as the swift Ship, as the Eagle that halteth to the Prey, they are swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle; our Life is even as a Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisheth away, as a little Breath that is turned in and out at our Nostriles, which is very easily and quickly stopped. The precise Time also of the expiring of this Breath of Life is (however to God, to whom, as is said, are known all his Works from the Beginning, most infallibly certain) to us most uncertain, Death comes on us ordinarily in such an Hour as we do not think of; it comes on us a Thief in the Night. We are now strong and in good Health, & on the sudden we grow weak and sickly: Now we live, and by and by we die, and we see Men no more in the Land of the Living. All which, to wit, the Certainty of our Death, the exceeding Brevity of our frail and brittle Life, with the great Uncertainty of the precise Time of our dying do with one Voice unanimously call aloud to us seriously to Mind, and with all our Might to make

for another Life, to make sure Peace & Friendship with GOD through the Blood of CHRIST's Cross; to secure an Interest in him (the Choice and Wale of all Interests, the only everlasting and durable Interest, in Comparison of which, all other Interests are but petty and inconsiderable, to which they all ought to cede and give Place, and as it were to strike their Flag, and lower their Top-sail) by sincere closing with JESUS CHRIST on his own Terms, and cordially consenting to, and taking hold of the Covenant of Grace; and to live so as becomes them, who are very certain that we shall die; and very uncertain how long we shall live; To endeavour thorough Grace to have our Loins girded, to have our Affections, as it were, tressed up that they may not hang down on the Earth, and to have our Lights burning, and not only to make sure on solid and good Grounds, that we have a Stock of habitual Grace; -but to endeavour to have it lively and vigorous in its Exercise, even as it were burning into a Flame; that we may be as Men waiting for the coming of their LORD, that in whatsoever Watch he shall come, we may be ready to open to him immediately, even at the very first Knock, were it on a Night's, or a Day's, or an Hour's, yea, were it on a Moments Warning, having our House, to say so, in such Order, and the spiritual Affairs of our Souls so well dispos'd of, and in so good a Posture and Case, that we may not be taken tardy or napping, nor be on a sudden sadly surpriz'd,

priz'd, to our unspeakable Prejudice; even to be in the most desir'd and delightful Condition, that *to us to live may be* CHRIST, that the very principal Scope and End which we propose to ourselves in desiring Life and Health may be the Honour and Glory of JESUS CHRIST; looking at Life with all the external Comforts and Conveniences of it, as but little valuable and unworthy to be desir'd, were it not mainly in order to this End: And then we may confidently and comfortably conclude, that Death, whenever, wherever, and however it should overtake us, would be Gain to us, by putting a final and eternal period to all the Remainders of indwelling Sin, to all the Temptations to Sin, to all Desertion, and to all Complaints, and Fears of Desertion and Hidings of God's Face; to all Doubtings about our gracious Estates, and about our Interest in God; to all Fears of back-sliding and offending, or of giving of Offence; to all Trouble, Sorrow, Sadness and Sighing on whatever Accounts; to all Indisposition to serve, worship, and glorify God, to all Interruptions of Fellowship with him, and to all Fellowship that is but mediate and in Part, to all sinful Ignorance and imperfect Knowledge or but in part. These great Theologues there read all their Divinity without Book, and without any of the least Difficulty in that beatifical immediate Vision of God's Face: And by ushering us into that blessed Estate, wherein we shall be *satisfied with his Likeness*, and that both

objectively and subjectively, being then admitted to see him in himself as he is, Face to Face, even to full, immediate and never to be interrupted Fellowship with him, and being privileged to see him in ourselves perfectly conformed to his Image in Holiness, according to the Creature Capacity, and put in Case to serve him there where his Servants serve him, where his Servants serve him as well as ever we desired to serve him in the best Frames we were ever in, and in the best Hours we ever had on Earth in the most countenanced publick Ordinances, or in the sweetest secret Duties of his Worship: Nay, which is yet more, where we shall serve him as well as ever he commanded us to serve him or shall desire us to serve him, that sure will be in a spiritual noble State as we never before served him while we sojourned here on Earth. Alas! how few, how very few, how lamentably few are there, even amongst the great Multitudes of professing Christians, of Pretenders to Godliness and to the Hope of that Gain and Blessedness that attend them that die in the Lord, who make it the great Business of their Life, to live thus, even, *all the Days of their appointed Time to wait till their Change come*; coveting and crying in Prayer to GOD, that he would graciously and effectually, *so teach them to number their Days, that they may apply their Hearts to Wisdom*? How many are there that may at their Death sadly complain, as it is storied of one *Similis*, Captain of the *Roman Emperor Hadrian* his Guard, who having lived long in the City, and at Court,

and

and having some Years before his Death retired himself into a private Country House, where he thought, it is like, he enjoyed himself more, being freed from the Avocations, Distractions, Noise, and cumbersome Converse of a Court-life, commanded that after his Death it should be written over his Grave, *Here lieth Similis, who was many Years and lived only Seven*: How many Professors of Religion are here, I say, that may thus sadly and sorrowfully complain of themselves when they come to die? Ah! We have been many Years, but have lived either none at all or but very few years: For that Life that is not lived to God, and to the Honour and Glory of JESUS CHRIST, is not at all worthy the Denomination of Life, since we are all the Time we live so but dead while we live. It is astonishing to think that rational Men and Women, professing they have immortal Souls, living especially under the clear Light and Sun-shine of the Gospel, who do not at all design and endeavour to love GOD, nor to live the Life that they now live in the Flesh by the Faith of the SON of GOD, should foolishly fancy themselves to live, and fondly flatter themselves in a golden Dream, that they shall be well at Death, and die in the LORD, and be blessed with them that die thus; who rest from their Labours, and whose Works follow them: *Who enter into Peace, rest in their Beds, every one walking in his Uprightness*. O! Fools Paradise, O deplorable and damnable Delusion. Whoever therefore would be, (as

all of us are unspeakably concerned to be) undeceived as to this self-murthering, and soul-ruining gross practical Error and Mistake, and seriously and sincerely desire to live as to they may have the well-grounded Hope of dying in the LORD; and of being truly blessed at and after their Death (without which it had been much better for them never to have lived at all, or to have lived the Life of Brutes, even of the most abject, vile contemptible Brutes, which when they are dead, are alone annihilate and gone) let them diligently peruse, and gravely ponder these few Sermons, and pray for a Blessing on them: The Design whereof (even excellently driven by the Author, who did most edifyingly and exemplarily, most convincingly and comfortably live and die thus) is to rectify such miserable Mistakes; and to airt h airt, which he doth by a most admirable divine Art, towards the sure and safe Way of dying happily, which is by living holily.

I doubt not, Chriltian Reader, of thy having read several other Tractates on this Subject, but I suppose thou hast hardly read any more solidly and succinctly, more pertinentlly, powerfullly and pungently written: And withal, more suited to the various Cases and Conditions of all Sorts of Readers than this.

As for me, while I was revising these Sermons, and making them ready for the Press, I was some Times as I still am made to doubt (I shall
not

not deny but my little acquaintance with other Mens Writings may considerably influence this Doubt) whether any ordinary Minister of the Gospel, hath readily to this Purpose handled so many notable Purposes to better Purpose, several of them surprizing, yet all of them clearly dependent upon, and natively consequent to one another, in so few Words.

Read then this little Book (which is Master DURHAM's, from whose Pen or Mouth, nothing hath hitherto dropped into the Press, that hath been unsavoury or unacceptable to the Churches of CHRIST) again and again, and digest it well, and I think I may with humble Boldness say, that if thou shouldst read nothing else on this concerning Subject but it, and what is written thereof in the Book of the sacred Scriptures, which in this and all the other Purposes treated of in it, doth infinitely transcend all the Writings of the ablest and holiest Men in the World, thou mayest through GOD's Blessing be sufficiently instructed thence to die the blessed Death of them that die in the LORD.

Now blessed eternally be our blessed LORD JESUS, who by his accursed, but most blessed Death hath procured all this Blessedness that attends & follows the Death of those that die in the LORD: Who are all blessed, & shall be blessed in despite of the Devil, of the World, and of the Remainder of Corruption dwelling in them, to their dying Day.

He himself hath pronounced the Blessing on them, and who shall, who dare, who can reverse

verse it? They are blessed that live and die in the LORD, and none but they; all true Blessedness is entailed upon, ingrossed, and monopolized unto this honourable Society: Not a Dram Weight of it (to say so) being to be found all the World over beside, whatever ignorant deluded Men may fancy to the Contrary. That thou mayst be found associate with this blessed Company, is the earnest Desire of,

Thy Servant in the Gospel,

J. C.

S E R M O N



S E R M O N . I.

ON REVELATION CHAP. XIV. VER. 13.

And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying, unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord; from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, That they may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.

TH E S E Words are singularly useful, material and momentuous in themselves, and it is not for nought that the Spirit of God puts such a Mark upon them, and that a special Commission is given to *John* to write them; we have therefore thought it meet to speak a Word of them beyond what we can easily reach in the Lecture, they including a Truth so very concerning unto us, even the right Way of dying and the Happiness that follows them that die in the LORD.

That we may a little open up the Meaning of the Words, we would consider that this Verse set down by Way of Transition coupleth the two last Parts of the Chapter together; for when *John* had spoken of the Warning and Advertisement
given

given to the World by the Ministers of the Gospel, ere he came to denounce Judgment for despising of the preached Gospel, those sweet Words are interjected by a voice from Heaven, *Write*, says he, *Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, &c.*

The Scope of them then is this, Since there were sad and doleful Days coming, and Judgments were like to be universal, after GOD's beginning to reckon for despising of the Gospel, that he may both set out the Greatness and Terribleness of the Judgments, and comfort the Godly against them, the LORD bids *John* write down this, That none who die in him needs to be afraid of them; as if he had said, Though these Judgments that are coming will be very great, and though many will be removed, and swept away by them, and though withal the coming Calamities will be such that the Godly will be ready to think them happy, that are taken away, yet notwithstanding, all these that die in me, are blessed.

There are four Things considerable in this Verse, 1. A Preface, *I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write*, importing the Weightiness of the Matter and Commission, for it is sent from Heaven unto *John*, and he is bidden write it, 'tis a heavenly Message sent by CHRIST to his Church, and even to his Church in these Times and Days wherein we live.

2. A plain Maxim, Conclusion or general Doctrine laid down in a most certain Truth, *Write*, saith

saith he, *Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD*, regilstrate and record this, says CHRIST, it has been and shall be a most infallible certain Truth to the End of the World, let never so many Confusions come, and let Kingdoms be turned upside down, they are blessed that die in me.

3. There is Qualification of this Truth, not denying the Universality of it, but seeming to apply it as specially verified in such a Time, *from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit*. We cannot so expone these Words as if the Meaning of them were, that from the Time of their Death they are blessed, though that be a Truth 1. Because it agrees not with the Scope, these Words being a Diverſion relating to this Time, and intended for a peculiar Comfort to the Godly, against the evil of the Judgment coming in this Time 2. Because it will not agree with the Particle here used, *from henceforth or now*, as it is in the Original, to expone it so, for then it would have been said, *from thenceforth*, that is, from their Death forward; but it is *from henceforth*, that is, now in this sad Time that is coming; and if any should ask, What should be the singular Happiness that these should have, who after this Time shall die in the LORD?

The Answer may be drawn from the Reason that is subjoined, which is the fourth Thing in the Text, *That they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them*.

This

This implieth a special tossing and troublesome time coming, & says thus much, that 'tis very good to be in Heaven ere that Time come; and out of this Reason we may see a threefold respect wherein their Happinness that die in the LORD is applicable to this Time, and they do all agree to the Scope 1. They are freed from such tossing Toil and Trouble that the surviving Godly would be involved in, who should have a hard and toilsome Life of it under the coming Judgments, (for the Scope is to set out the Greatness of the approaching Judgments) and they are happy that are taken away from the Evil to come, as *Solomon* says, *Eccles. 4. 2. I praised the Dead which are already dead, more than the Living which are alive;* meaning they are freed from the Troubles, Vanities and Vexations that the Living are waited with; they are (as if the SPIRIT had said) freed from a toilsome and troublesome World, more so now at this Time than at other Times. 2. They are happy in this respect, that now when the Gospel is broken out they die with more Confidence, being freed from the Fear of Purgatory, being clear in the Matter of their Salvation, and assured of their going immediately to Paradise, and this is holden forth in the End of the Words, in that it is said, *their Works do follow them*; though they have no Expectation to receive any Thing by Way a Merit, yet it shall be well with them who have kept a good Conscience, for *they shall eat the Fruit of their Doings*, as it is in *Isa.* 3. For though God give not any Thing to his People for their Works,

yet

yet he rewards them according to their Works, so proportioning his proceeding with them, as nothing shall be found to have been done by them for him for nought; and this is a special Part of their Happiness, That they shall be freed from the Anxiety that the Darknes of these superstitious Times kept Men under, being now cleared by the Light of the Gospel. 4. Comparing this Verse 11. *They are blessed that die now in the LORD*, after Life and Immortality is brought to Light by the Gospel, because they are freed from the scorching Hell that those got who worshipped the Beast; now when the Light is come, *are they not blessed that die in the LORD*, and are freed from that which they would have met with, if they had not lived and died in him, but in Darknes and Ignorance of him; and so the Words say, That when the Gospel breaketh forth Men must resolve to live and die in CHRIST, or to live and die in a more damnable Condition than the Heathen that lived before them without the Gospel.

In this Conclusion or general Doctrine we have these three Things implied. 1. Something common to all, and that is dying; Good and Bad have that Lot, all must die. 2. That there is a Difference in dying, as to some, the Death be common to all, and that is, to die in the LORD. 3. That there is a peculiar Effect, or Advantage to them that die with this Qualification, and that is Happiness or Blessedness; and these two last imply, That there are many who die not in the LORD, and that consequently they are accursed who neither live nor die in him. The

The general Doctrine is plain, and it greatly concerns every one to take notice of it. It were good this Text were engraven in deep and legible Characters on our Hearts, that we may learn to reckon Blessedness, not so much from our Life, as from our living and dying shortly together; Be what we will in our Life, if we dy not in CHRIST, there is a great Let and Mank in our Happiness, a Curse instead of a Blessing, and if this indispensable Qualification be in it, it intitles us to this Blessedness; O therefore, let these plain Words and the Necessity of the Doctrine speak home to you.

First, Then it is implied here, There is a Necessity of dying lying on all; for while it is said, *Blessed are the Dead that die in the LORD*, it says plainly, That there is a Sort of dying, that is in the LORD; and a Sort of dying, that is out of the LORD; and all Sorts of Men and Women die in one of these Ways; as if he had said, Would you know who are indeed happy? 'Tis not all who die; but such only as die in the LORD; you know what Death is, we need not describe it to you, and you are dispos'd to think this needs not be provid, *That all must die*, and we wish that it needed no Proof, however see *Heb. 9. 26. It is appointed for all Men once to die*, and *Rom. 5.* where it is said, *That Death hath passed upon all Men*, and that *Death reigns over all Men*, Ver 12. and 14. And 2. It is certain from the Cause of Death, which is Sin, and God's Curse for Sin, Death is the Wages of Sin, and where Sin is as the Cause, Death must be the Effect.

fect. Yea, 3. It may be confirmed from near 6000 Years Experience, wherein none that have been born throughout all Generations but they have died; we speak not of those extraordinary Examples of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who were particularly and singularly by the sovereign Dominion of God exempted from Death, neither will we speak of what the LORD did to them in the Place of Death, or for putting them in a Capacity to sustain Immortality; God's ordinary Way of Dealing with Men, is that which we are called to look to, 'tis enough that they have put off Mortality, and put on Immortality, though we know not the Manner and Way; but look on the Race of Mankind, and ye will find that they who lived longest died at last, as *Adam*, *Enos*, *Cainan*; *Mahalaleel*, *Jared*, *Gen. 5.* and *Methuselah*, though he lived nine hundred sixty and nine Years, yet he died, and 'tis said, *Eccles. 8. 8. There is no Man that hath Power over the Spirit to retain it, neither hath he Power in the Day of Death: And there is no Discharge in that War, neither shall Wickedness deliver those that are given to it; there is no Man that hath Power to keep his Soul in his Body, there is no Dismission, or Forlooff in that War, no Way to escape Death, the profanest Man that puts Death furthest off from him, shall not shift it; and seeing he takes it for granted, and all Generations have prov'd the Truth of it, we shall insist no further on the Proof of it, but come to the Use.*

Use

Use 2. It serveth to settle and fix the Impression of the Truth of this Point deeply upon us, and withal to reprove our living so much from under and without it; Alas, we take general Truths for granted; but for any suitable Use or Application of them in our Practice, we live for most Part as if they were Untruths; we live as mortal in respect of Sicknes, Infirmities and Fears, but we live as immortal in respect of the stayed thoughts of a World to come: Let me therefore pose you in sober Sadness: How oft do you think seriously of dying? When laid you your Reckoning solidly for it? When descended ye into your Hearts, to see how it would be with you at Death? How often have you made your Testament this Way, to say so? And when took ye your leave and Farewel of the Things of this World, and laid them some Way by, on this Consideration, that Death will make a final Separation betwixt you & them? Take these two or three Evidences, that you do not indeed mind Death and Mortality. 1. The stupid Security we generally live under, and our great Unwatchfulness, saith plainly that we do not mind Death. If we were thinking on Death would we be so careless in counting with God, and so little afraid what would become of the immortal Soul, and live as if there were not a Life eternal, and as those of the old World did, who eated, and never, to say so, once altered their Pace? Ah, is it not so with the most Part now? Death lights like a Falcon out of the Air, on the most Part of Men unaware because this general Truth is not practically believed;

lieved; there could not be so deep and senseless Security, if there were serious Thoughts and real Belief of dying. 2. The great earthly Mindedness, and insatiable coveting, and lusting after the Things of the World, as if Men were perpetually to abide with them, clearly and convincingly speak out this. Believe me, serious Thoughts of dying, would much wean and estrange from these Things; Men, Alas! seek after a Happiness here in Time, as if they were to have an eternal Abode in the World, as that poor rich Man in the Gospel did, who brutishly said to his Soul, *Soul, take thee rest, for thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years, eat, drink and be merry.* If Men were on their Wing, looking for Death, sure they would not thus glut themselves with these worldly empty Things, ugly disproportioned Objects, for satisfying the vast Appetite of an immortal Soul, which by its Constitution is elevated to the Capacity of an Happiness of a higher and more excellent Nature than these Things can possible amount unto; take this then for a palpable Evidence of your Athiesm and Unbelief in this concerning Point, and let the Thoughts of Death come in, to bound and moderate your eager and inordinate pleasure of the World. 3. The great Pride and Loftiness of Men and Women is a Demonstration of this; if you minded Death in good Earnest, and believed that it were near, even at the Door, and that your Breath is in your Nostrils, it would make you humble in your walking with God, and in your conversing one with

with another. 4. Little Preparation for dying and for the Life to come, if there were no more, says plainly and undeniably that you lay not Death seriously to Heart, which if you did, you would be seeking more to lay up Treasure in Heaven, and to be flitting, to say so, your Affections thither and towards Things above, and be to casting your Anchor within the Vail.

Use 2. In oppsition to the former Security, and stupid Unconcernedness, let me beseech you to mind this more seriously, which is so certain; and to take more Pains to the preparing of yourselves for it: - Eternity is long, O vastly and incomprehensibly long: Heaven and Hell are Matters of great, unspeakable great Moment and Consequence; when the Master or Goodman of the House is, to say so, laid down, and hath shut the Door, there will thenceforth be no opening: 'Tis now your Summer, Provide, O provide for your long Winter; 'tis ill Thrift to leave that which is of the greatest Concernment hindmost, and to put over the securing of your eternal State till the Time of Sicknêss and Death; you know not if ever you shall get Advertisment by any lengthned Disease; and Sicknêss will have much to do with itself; neither know you but you may be snatched away in a Moment on a sudden: And believe it, 'tis no common Thing to die well, and to have Death as the Entry and Door to Happiness.

Therefore to stir you up seriously and time-
ously

ously to mind dying, that you may not with the Sluggard say, *Yet a little Sleep, yet a little Slumber, yet a little folding of the Hands to sleep*, whereby the Fool is slain: Consider,

1. That it will not be bare Wishes that will make you die well; *Balaam* had many such Wishes to die the Death of the Righteous, and yet was nothing the better of them; spend not your Days idly, trifle not away your Time unprofitably, for Death is always coming on, and will not stay and wait on your Preparation when it comes, seek therefore to be found in a watchful and praying Frame, blessed is the Servant, who when his Master comes, is found in that Posture, waiting for the coming of his LORD, and ready to open to him immediately, or at the very first Knock, as it is *Luke 12. Verse 36.* O strange emphatick Word! 2. Consider how few they are who at Death are ready, and how few they are who at Death get the Liberty, and Blessing to make themselves ready; some I grant, as one Thief on the Cross finds mercy, that none may despair, yet 'tis but one, that none may presume, but that all may be alarmed to look well and watchfully to themselves; many will go to Hell, no doubt, who will seek to enter into Heaven, and yet will not be able, a sort of whinging and youling at Death may be in very godless and atheistical Persons. because they did not begin in Time to seek to enter, as the Scope of that Parable sheweth; if you heard the Language of many in Hell, O! how would they to the Life preach this Point?

Be-

Beware of delaying and putting off the Time many that are there, did you hear them speak, would readily say, O! that was our Ruin, and did undo us; but if the Word of God do not affect you, nor work you up to the serious Consideration of this, though one should rise from the Dead and preach to you, it would not affect you to any Advantage. 3. Consider that the longer ye be of thinking on Death, it will be the terrible when it comes, serious and suitable Thoughts of Death before-hand would do much to mitigate the Terror of it; but when Death comes violently and suddenly on you, and finds you unsettled and sitten down in the World, and will needs have you loosed and raised, it is in that Case indeed as the King of Terrors; whereas if ye were dying daily, and by conversing with Death, come to have Experience of little Deaths before-hand, that would make Death itself when it should come, much more easy, if especially you were dying to your Lusts and Idols, mortified to the World, and to the Things that are in it; Death should have in that Case but little to do when it came; for it is the cleaving of your Hearts to these Things, and your being glued to them that makes Death so terrible; for it will not tryst, nor treat, but suddenly and inexorably separate you and them. 4. Consider the longer you be a beginning to mind your eternal State, and to think seriously of dying, you will have the more to do when Death comes: O, there is much Work about dying, even to these that have been thinking on it,
how

how to get Faith in CHRIST aright, how to get themselves rolled on the everlasting Covenant for Salvation, how to be in a patient, calm composed Frame to encounter the Terrors that accompany Death, how to be wean'd from the World, and to have their Affections heavenly: Surely the longer you put off, you will have the more to do, and will readily be the less able to do it, and is it Wisdom think you, to leave your greatest and most necessary work to your last, weakest and unfittest Time to go about it? which yet alas, is the lamentably foolish, demented, rueful, and soul ruining Practice even of many Hearers of the Gospel; there is none of these Things, but it must be done before Death, or not at all, what's in the Bargain or Business then? O what is in it? 'Tis not ten or twenty thousand years Happiness or Misery, but an Eternity, of Happiness or Misery in the greatest Measure and highest Degree that can be imagin'd, and should such a Business be delayed and put off? And this is even it in the Text, by which dying in the LORD is so much commended.

Now before I close this Sermon, let me speak a Word to what it is to *die in the LORD*, which is holden forth as the great and necessary Qualification of them that die with well-grounded Confidence and warrantably expected Happiness, and there are three Scripture Phrases that conduce very much to the opening of it. 1. It implies a being in CHRIST, as that Word is, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any Man be in CHRIST, he is a new Creature*, this holds out Union with him by Faith, when CHRIST

openeth his Arms and takes the Soul into himself, which fleeth to him, closeth with, and cleaveth to him, like a Graft that is impied in the City of Refuge; this is the first Step and Ground of Happiness, and it hath with it a new Nature and a new Life. The 2d Phrase is, *Gal. 2. 20. I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me, and the Life that I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the SON of GOD.* And this a Step further: When a Man by Faith is fled to CHRIST, and improves and makes use of his Title to him, and Interest in him for performing the Acts of Life; this living in CHRIST, or by the Faith of CHRIST expresseth and holdeth forth a new Nature and Life in the Acts of Life, in bringing forth the Fruits of the SPIRIT, and makes the Person indeed a Christian Man, or Man-Christian, doing not only the Duties of Religion, but all his moral, civil and natural Actions to CHRIST, living thus Christian-like, as spiritual and from the SPIRIT, as the Word is, *2 Cor. 5. 5. Living not to ourselves, but to him &c.* 3. There is a dying in the LORD here in the Text, which follows upon the former; living in him is the way to Happiness, and dying in him is the very door through which he entrencheth into the possession of Happiness; now this dying in the LORD presupposeth the former, and hath some what more in it, to wit, as an acting of Faith for living in him, so an acting of Faith for dying in him; it takes in, 1. A flying to CHRIST afresh, and of new for Refuge,

fuge, as it is, *Philip. 3. 9.* A seeking to be found in him, leaping as it were out of ourselves and betaking ourselves to him as our Ship to sail in through death to Life, renouncing our own Righteousness of new, and closing with his, yea, and renouncing the very Acts of our Faith as they are Acts. 2. It takes in a giving of credit to CHRIST for bearing us through Death, acquiescing in, and resting on that Ground, sticking close by our Grips of him, being well content and satisfied to adventure to go through Death in his hand, and having gotten a Word from CHRIST, resolvedly to keep the Grip of it, and with old *Simeon* to say, *Now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace*; LORD, I am content to take shipping as it were, in CHRIST, and on that Bottom to sail through the Gulph of Death when thou wilt. 3. It taketh in a humble quieting and satisfying of ourselves on these Grounds, not only delighting ourselves in him as All-sufficient, but comforting ourselves, in our thus resting on him, and counting ourselves happy in it: Something of all these last three, we will find holden forth in these called the last Words of *David*, his Swan-like Song when he is going to die, *2 Sam. 28. 5.* *Although my House be not so with GOD, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant*: Here is the first Step, of his betaking of himself, and flying for his Life to the Grace of GOD, in CHRIST, holden out in the covenant. 2. *He goes forward and credits himself to, and contents himself in this Covenant, calling it a well ordered Covenant, able and sufficient to do his Turn.*

O! 'tis a tight Vessel that cannot have a Leak, as if he had said, I may sail through Death in it safely and not fear. 3 There is his delighting and satisfying himself in it, his acquiescing in it, *this is all my Salvation, and all my Desire*, 'tis all my heart can wish, 'tis *mensura voti*, the very utmost Measure of my Wishes, I need no more, and I desire no more. Now when we speak of dying in the LORD, we would have you to take three Steps together. 1. Study to be in him, there is no possible dying in him without being in him; any that would be happy by dying in him would by all means accept of the Offers of the Gospel, fly to CHRIST for Refuge, and close with him by Faith, and endeavour to put that out of Question, that you are in him; O make it sure that thou hast given him a soul to save, and acquiesce in him as thy Saviour. 2. Live by Faith in him, there is none that can expect to die in CHRIST that never seriously sought to live in him; make it manifest that you live in him, by having another sort of Life than brutish Men still in that natural State have: GOD may call a Thief on the Cross, and make him to die in CHRIST that has not lived in him, but none of you can comfortably expect that he will deal so with you, and where one is so dealt with, twenty, if not an hundred, even very many die without it; and let me say it, if ever any Time GOD was striking Men and Women with Stupidity at Death, it is palpable, he is striking many so at this Time; it may be some of you may know GOD striking some with Stupidity, that made a Mock at the serious Exercise of Codliness in their Lifetime;

time; therefore, I say again, Make your being in CHRIST sure, evidence your being in him by living in and to him. We shall not insist further at this Time on this subject. God calls us all seriously to think on it; Sicknes smiting with Judgments, and Death have not readily been more frequent; and if ever there was a Time when Folk were called to believe and lay to Heart such a Doctrine, this is the Time; it may be there are some here, who ere a few Days go by, may experience the Truth of it, and who knows who these some shall be? As ye expect Happiness, learn to die, and as to die in CHRIST, so to live in him: And as the LORD bids *John* write these Words, so we bid you read them, and think often on them, *Blessed are the Dead that die in the LORD, from henceforth, saith the SPIRIT; that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

* * * * *

S E R M O N II.

REVELATION CHAP. XIV. VER. 13.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, etc.

THere is one Thing common to all Men, & that is a natural Inclination to, and an Appetite and Desire after Happiness or Blessedness,

but there are two Things wherein the most Part of Men do exceedingly err; 1. *In seeking Blessedness where it is not to be found, and accounting that to be Blessedness which is not so, but leaves them eternally miserable.* 2. *That when some Glances of Happiness, and wherein it consists are gotten, they grossly mistake the Way to come by it; these Words give a notable Description of true Blessedness, and a clear Direction towards the Way how to come at it, they shew us plainly where it lieth. let the blind and prejudicate World esteem of it as they will, Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, that is only true Blessedness which the Dead in the LORD enjoy, and that is the only way to true Blessedness, to be in CHRIST, and to live and die in him.*

This is a most concerning Subject, and singularly suitable to our Times; it being probable that with respect to these Times the Words are spoken, we shall therefore proceed to add a little to what was said the last Day.

The Doctrine which we shall now propose, and prosecute, lieth plainly and obviously in the very Words of the Text, *They are blessed and happy, yea, they are only, are only blessed and happy, that are dead in the LORD CHRIST, or shall die in him.* A Voice from Heaven asserts it to John, and the SPIRIT adds a Confirmation of it, *Yea, saith the SPIRIT, who is the SPIRIT of CHRIST, and the SPIRIT of Truth.* We shall ere we proceed further, in a Word or two clear these Things in the Doctrine which are also in the Words.

1. What

1. What this blessedness is. It is spoken of here as that which is singularly so, it is the only happy condition that can be thought on in all the World, it is even to be fully and completely blessed.

2. What is the necessary Qualification of these Persons who are pronounced to be blessed. It is not these that die, but those that die in the LORD that are thus blessed; and for clearing of this, beside what we said the last Day, we shall now add that there are two Sorts of dying spoken of in Scripture. 1. There is a dying in Sin, *If ye believe not in me, ye shall die in your Sins,* says CHRIST to the Jews, *John 8. 24.* And this implies two Things. 1. Ye shall die under the Guilt of your Sins, and under the Curse & Wrath of GOD which ye deserve before Death, at Death, and after Death. 2. Ye shall die in a sinful Estate in Opposition to Repentance for Sin, ye shall slip away, and be removed in that sinful Condition, ye shall depart and go off the World in that sinful State: O sad and sorrowful Departure! 3. There is a dying in the LORD, and this implies two Things also just opposite to dying in their Sins. 1. That persons in the Sense of their Sins have betaken themselves to CHRIST, & are freed from the Guilt of Sin by Faith in him, and are clothed with his Righteousness, or with a Right and Title to it. 2. It implieth a breaking off of the Course of Sin, and the bringing forth the Fruits of a new nature and Life, by a lively Faith in CHRIST, in whom as the true Vine they are as so many Branches grafted, abiding

in him, and bringing forth Fruit to him, that his Father may be glorified, and they manifested to be his disciples, *John 15*. Who as they have Union with him by Faith, so they have Communion with him in the Fruits of Sanctification; these, and these only are thus blessed; & this Blessedness is restricted unto, and entailed upon them only, and peremptorily denied to all others, and they utterly excluded from it.

In prosecuting the Doctrine, I shall 1. Clear the Truth of this, *that they are blessed, exceedingly blessed, & only blessed who are dead, or dy in the LORD*. 2. I shall offer two or three Reasons proving, *That this Blessedness is peculiar to them and not to any other*. 3. I shall speak a little to the Use and Improvement of it.

For clearing of the First, *That they are exceedingly blessed that are dead or shall dy in the LORD*, we need not to do more but describe Happiness or Blessedness, and we will find it exactly to agree in all its Properties and Circumstances, to them that are dead or shall die in CHRIST. O Sirs, look not on this as a Story, or some airy Notion, but as that which is a great Reality, a Thing which some of our Christian Acquaintance dead in the LORD do now enjoy, and which others ere long shall enjoy, and that which by Faith in him ye may all enjoy, if you prejudge not yourselves of it. There are two Things necessary to, and constitutive of true Blessedness or Happiness. 1. An absolute Freedom from all Evil, from every Thing that troubles, or may be the Cause of Trouble, and from any sinful, blameable or unsuitable Defect

fect or Want, for Happiness cannot consist or stand with any Thing of that Kind. 2 A Concurrence of all the good Things that are necessary to complete Blessedness or Happiness, both which are enjoyed by all those that die in the LORD, and by them only.

For the first Part, *They that die in the LORD are perfectly freed from all Evil*, which holds true, whether we look to it more generally or with more particular respect to the Scope; they are freed from all these Evils that an Evil Time hath with it: To descend into the particular Consideration of this Blessedness would not be easy, let us only therefore look on some general Heads to clear it so far as concerns the present point. 1. They have freedom from all Sin, that is the Fountain of all Evils; *the Spirits of just Men are made perfect* before the Throne, no Flesh nor Blood as corrupt is permitted to enter there, no Rebellion in the Law of the Members against the Law of the Mind is there, no Remainder of the evil Heart of Unbelief in drawing back from the Living God, or any wearying in holy Duties, but a delightful serving of God Day and Night; that is without any interruption, for there is not Day and Night, but constant Day in that Life: Then, O then is that petition so often put up to him in his Peoples Prayers, *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven* fulfilled; there is then a most perfect doing of his Will, there his Servants serve him in such a spiritual noble State as he was never served by them on Earth; this

light, vain, and unstable Heart shall then be established and even fixed as an unmoveable Pillar in the Temple of God, the Looseness of a wavering, gadding and wandering Mind shall then be quite and for ever removed, and the Thoughts of it so strongly stayed in the Contemplation of that most blessed Object, that they shall not for so much as one Moment be diverted, there will not then be any of the least Inclination to, nor Capacity of a Diversion: O what would some give (were it to be bought) for this Part of Happiness! even to be fully and finally delivered from a Body of Death, and from the many sinful Pranks of it, and the dangerous Precipices that it drives them upon.

2. They have perfect Freedom from all Temptations to Sin, there doth not in that most clear and serene upper Region breathe the least Air of Temptations, there is no Temptation to Sin from without, as there is no Inclination to Sin from within, and consequently there is a full Freedom from all Fear of Hazard and Danger of sinning, *no unclean Things comes within the Gates of the new Jerusalem*: Sin, Death, and the Devil being cast into the Lake; there is no evil Example there, but on the contrary, if there were any Need of stirring up, strengthening and encouraging one of another, it is there eminently, there is withal there a holy Freedom from the Difficulty that is in watching here, which tho it be a requisite, useful and necessary Duty in sojourning Saints, yet it hath with it a Painfulness and Fear, from which
the

the Dead in the LORD even triumphing Saints are perfectly freed.

3. They are freed from all Challenges for Sin, they have here no troublesome nor disquieting Exercise of Conscience, the immediate Enjoyment of God's Company so quiets and satisfies them, that nothing can disquiet them; there they are under no Desertion; nor Fear of Desertion, and these are often two sad Exercises to the Godly here, Challenges of their Conscience for Sin, and the Weights on their Spirits because of Desertion; there is moreover no lukewarm nor any lifeless, spiritless Condition there, but a Condition always fresh, lively, and at the very best; they are continually praising in the Sense of the Love of God overflowing them in Duty; the Dead in the LORD must then be in a most happy Condition, when they are freed from all these, and from all Fear of them. But,

4. They are freed from all the Effects of Sin, there is no Curse, no Wrath, no Sickness of Body, no Anxiety of Mind there, no Terror nor Apprehension of Indignation; no Poverty, no Scarcity nor Want to them of any Thing there, (how poor soever a Life they may have here) but God is all, and in all; he by himself immediately, fills the Room of all Things, and fills up the vastest Capacities of the Soul; they are also freed from all the tossing Troubles that are in this lower World, there are no Confinings or Finings, no Sequestration nor Forefaulters; there is no Sorrow, for then shall all Tears be wiped away from your Eyes, and then shall ye be made perfectly

ly blessed and happy in the full Fruition of God to all Eternity, there is no Reproach, nor Discredit, nor Disgrace there, but a new Name given; there is no Mistakes nor Jealousies, no Alienations nor Animosities, nor Rents, nor Divisions, no unsuitable Passions nor Heats there, but a most comely and complete Union, and holy Harmony in the praising of God, there is no Darkens of Mind there, the Understanding being perfectly enlightned, no Disorder in the Affections, but a most exact Regularity, no Perverseness nor Backwardness in the Will, but a most thorough Compliance in all Things with the Will of God, all within the Man sweetly conspiring in an holy Harmony, and in a due Subordination to the Head; there is no Scandal or Offence given nor taken there, there is no sadning Reports nor ill News there; nay, it is impossible it can be, since God orders all immediately, and they approve all that he does, they applaud too, and are well satisfied with all, there are no Overturnings of Kingdoms and States, nor Confusions nor Desolations in Churches to marr their Happiness there; but they being fully acquainted with the infinitely wise Proceedings of God, there is nothing that can marr their Happiness, suppose they knew all these overturnings, Confusions and Distractions that make us sad here below; they cannot be troubled with the Want nor with the Fear of the Want of any Thing, and thus they continue to be for ever and ever; yet this is but a little Piece of their Happiness that die in the LORD, how small a Portion of it do we know?

As

As to the other half of their Happiness (and O that you knew and believed what the Happiness is which they have that are now before the Throne) we said in general, that there is in it a Concurrence of all good Things necessary for making them completely happy; and it must have these four Things concurring to this End, which are all in their Estate which die in the LORD. 1. An enjoying of GOD the chief Good; for no other Thing nor Person can communicate true Happiness, nor make one truly happy. 2. Because there cannot be an enjoying of him without some suitableness to him, therefore a suitableness for the Enjoyment of GOD is required, for we could not, we doubt not fully and immediately enjoy GOD in the Estate wherein we now are. 3. It requires full Measures and Degrees of enjoying GOD. 4. It requires a perpetual and eternal enjoying of him, and all their Concurrence, as I said, to complete the Happiness of them that die in the LORD. *1. They do fully enjoy GOD the chief Good; Look where Abraham is, there are they; he is in the Kingdom of his Father, and so are they, and therefore most happy; hence it is that CHRIST speaking of Blessedness to his Disciples, he tells them that they shall sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 8. 11. They have Places among them that stand by, Zech. 37. They see his Face, and are therefore happy, blessed are the pure in Heart for they shall see GOD, Matth. 5. 8. When we speak of enjoying GOD, it is far, very far above and beyond what we can express*

press; it must sure be a great Happiness and Delight, when this Object of their Delight is no created Thing, but the infinite and all-sufficient GOD. It must be a pure heavenly and excellent Delight, that flows from the Enjoyment of GOD, with whom is the Fountain of Life 2. They are made meet and suitable in a full Measure and in a high Degree: if we would imagine Mans Understanding to be enlarged to conceive of GOD, and the Enlargement of it to be very far beyond that which we can now imagine or conceive, it shall thus be dilated and filled; it shall then have a distinct and fully satisfying Knowledge of the great Mystery of the adorable Trinity; as CHRIST assures his Disciples, *John 14. 20. At that Day ye shall know that I am in the Father.* The Affections shall then be made capacious to receive, and shall be filled and satisfied with Delight in the Enjoyment of that clearly and distinctly known Object; it satisfies Angels, and must satisfy the Spirits of just Men made perfect, it makes them happy to behold and enjoy him, and the greatest Happiness that the Scripture speaks of, is to be in CHRIST's Company, beholding the Glory that he has gotten from the Father; and if you could suitably conceive what Condition *David, Paul,* and some that have gone a few Years or Months since into that blessed Rest are in, it would make you long to die in the LORD, and would through Grace put you to give all Diligence in Time to make that Happiness sure. 3. As they are

are made suitable and meet to enjoy God in a full Measure and high Degree, so they shall enjoy him in a full Measure and actually, there is no more desired than desireable, it is full Glory and full joy, none can imagine or wish more, it being a Thing to which there can be no Accession made according to the Capacity they are put into; for there be different Degrees of Glory, and some conceive and receive more, and some less, yet all are filled, even filled with the Love and Loving-kindness of God, with that fulness of Joys, and these Pleasures that are at his right-Hand; and they have all this not in bare Notions, but really, and in an incomprehensible Way (to us at least incomprehensible) communicated to them. 4. This enjoying of God is perpetual and eternal, for ever and ever, without Interruption or Intermision; 'tis not only a full but an everlasting Joy and Glory, Sorrow and sighing shall then for ever flee away, and everlasting Joy shall be upon their Heads for evermore; the Crown is an eternal and immarcessible one, even a Crown of Life that is perpetually flourishing; yet all that we have said falls hugely short of, and as to our Manner of expressing it, unworthy to be compared with the Happiness of them that die in the LORD. If any of them heard us speak of their Condition, they would wonder to hear us do it so childishly, poorly, meanly, and bauchly: O that we would stretch ourselves to believe that which we cannot so distinctly conceive of this Blessedness.

The

The next Thing I proposed to speak a Word or two to, is the Reason why Blessedness is peculiar only to them that die in the LORD, and not to any others; I shall only hint at three, the 1. Whereof is, *Because only they that die in the LORD CHRIST, are made Partakers of his Satisfaction*, and therefore they, and they only are freed from the Curse by believing in him, *John 3. 36. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but hath everlasting Life, but he that believeth not is condemned already, and the Wrath of GOD abideth on him, John 3. 18. 36.* They that believe have gotten a Discharge of their Debt, *the Hand writing that was against them is cancelled*; but they that believe not, have the Bond still standing over their Heads, and they for their Debt undischarged, shall be haled before the Judge, and cast into Prison, where they must ly till they pay the utmost Farthing, which will never be done.

2. Because they only that are in CHRIST, and die in him, are priviledged with the Adoption of Sons and consequently they have only Right to Heaven and eternal Life, to as many as received him, *he gave Power to become the Sons of GOD*, that is, to as many as believe on his Name, *John 1. 12. And if Sons, then Heirs, and Joint-heirs with CHRIST, Rom. 8. 17. If we be not Sons, then we are not Heirs.*

3. Because only they that live and die in CHRIST are new Creatures; *If any Man be in CHRIST, he is a new Creature, 2 Cor. 5. 17.* And in CHRIST JESUS nothing avails but a new Creature, *Gal.*

6. 17. *Except a Man be born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* John 3. 3. And there being none born again but they that are in CHRIST, and our Regeneration and Faith in CHRIST going inseparably together, none can be happy but those that live and die in him.

We come now in the 3d. place according to the Method proposed, to speak to the Uses of this Doctrine, which must needs have many Uses, being such a high Point as holds forth the right Way, and the only Way to true Blessedness.

The first *Use* then is to put us all to be more seriously exercised, how to die well, and that is to die in the LORD; seeing Happiness, and such a Happiness depends on it, and only on it, then sure Folks should be exceedingly concerned to walk by this Middle of dying in him as they would meet with Happiness at the End. There are many Things that press this; as, 1. If Peace and Tranquility of Mind and Conscience be of Concernment, then this is of Concernment, for how can they possibly have that Peace, that know not whether they go to Heaven or Hell? 2. If Comfort in any Thing or all Things be of Concernment, then this is of Concernment, for how can Mens Sleep, Meat, Drink Apparel, or any Thing they enjoy be comfortable to them, if they know not that they are in him? This one Word may marr all their Mirth and Happiness, they that are not in him shall die miserably, and so lose all other Comforts. 3. If it be of concernment to have Boldness and Confidence GOD wards at Death, this is of Concernment;

For

For if Death sadly surprife Men, how can they have Peace, Confidence or Boldness ſince they are not in him? All the World cannot buy nor purchafe a quiet and good Conſcience to them, 4. If we think Heaven or Happineſs to be of Concernment, then this is no doubt of Concernment, for Heaven and Happineſs are knit to dying in him; and therefore let me in the Name of the LORD lay it upon you, by all ſuitable Means, to endeavour to bear in upon your very Hearts, to have your Peace with GOD made in Time, that die when ye will, it may be made ſure, that it ſhall be in him: Think ye, that to be eternally in Heaven or in Hell is of little Concernment? It is your Way of dying that makes the Difference, as the Tree falls ſo it will ly; there will be no revoking of that Sentence, nor any Change of your State after Death, and knows any of you when it will come? Are any ſure to get Time or Grace then to make Peace with GOD when Sickneſs and Death comes? Are there not many ſtricken with Hardneſs, and Senſeleſneſs, and Conſcience-benumbing Stupidity at their Death? Remember therefore that Death is coming, and ſtudy to have this much in your Eye.

To proſecute this Uſe a little, and to reprove the great Stupidity that the moſt Part live in, as if they cared not how to die, for how live many groſſly prophane & atheiſtical Men, as if they were to die like Beaſts? And how many presumptuous Hypocrites are there, that think it a very eaſy Matter to die, yea that it is nothing; and how many are there who have frequent Fears and Conviſions,
eſpecially

especially at Death, who yet never come this Length to make it sure on good Grounds, that their Sins are laid on CHRIST and to make it their great business to have their Corruption mortified by his Grace, that they may die in him? And how many are there that have some Good in them who are very lazy and careless, and who in a Manner let Death come as it will? We shall (seeing it is of great Concernment) press it on you by familiarly laying before you some Things that are very ordinary to Men and Women at their Death: We look, alas! upon Death afar off, but we should bring it near to us, and have it always before us, the Neglect whereof makes Men very ordinarily die as they live; and that is not well, nor in the LORD. There are four Cases or Conditions that we most ordinarily meet with in the Plurality of them that die. 1. We find some senseless and stupid without any Fear of GOD, or regard to their Souls; they lived a stupid Life without all Fear and Awe of the Majesty of GOD, and they die so; thus churlish Nabal died as he lived, most stupidly and senselessly: it might possibly be edifying, though very sad, to speak of the lamentable Condition of some graceless Persons that die among us, therefore put away Senselessness and stupidity now along your Life as you would not die senseless and stupid.

A second Sort of Persons we meet with, who have been presuming all their Days, and will needs pertinaciously dispute it out at their Death, that all shall be well with them, and though it may

may be palpably discerned, that they are without all due Sense of Sin, and utterly void of Grace, yet they will confidently aver, that they believed all their days, and will not quit their deluding Hopes that all shall be well with them now at Death. O, Sirs ! think you that to be a good Condition, to die without Sense of Sin, and with worth, tasteless, lifeless and groundless Apprehensions of Mercy ; dread therefore, and deprecate Presumption : O ! but it is hard to get some of you convinced of it, and yet it is a special Thing that keeps you from coming in good Earnest to CHRIST. A third Sort are these that die with some little Challenges, and at the best with much doubtings and many Fears, who have had their own Convictions, Fears & Doubtings in their Life, and yet never labour in God's Way, to be thorough in the Matter of their Interest in, and Peace with God ; they are afraid to die and yet die they must ; the Faith they had misgives them, and the strong Apprehension they have of Wrath quite overturns their Confidence and Hope, the just Recompence of living in the doubtful and doubting Condition, without serious seeking after thorow Clearness ; I grant this Condition is somewhat better than any of the former two, and yet an evil and dangerous Condition to die in ; Words spoken to them do neither satisfy nor settle them, for either they have little Judgment, or Temptations are strong and vigorous, or bodily Infirmity is growing fast on them. There is a fourth Sort of self-righteous Persons that please themselves with the Hope of Heaven

Heaven, because they have been good Neighbours and lived harmlessly, they were not grossly prophane, they were not Drunkards, Swearers, Sabbath-breakers and Extortioners, &c. But civil and honest, faithful and just in their Dealings and their Callings, they had Prayer in their Families and in secret, they waited on Ordinances, &c. And at Death they confirm themselves from these Grounds, that all shall be well; we condemn not Duties, God forbid; but 'tis a sad and hazardous Case, when they are mainly laid Weight on, and stuck to at Death; such Self-justifiers are brought in by the LORD; *Luke 13.* saying, LORD, *we have eaten and drunken in thy Presence, &c.* Whom yet he boasts away from him: See how the proud and self-justifying Pharisee on such Grounds as these is sent away unjustified, *Luke 18.* Folks habituating themselves to these Grounds of Confidence in their Lifetime, makes them stick stily to them at their Death, and keeps them from seeing the absolute Necessity of CHRIST's imputed Righteousness, and from flying to it for their Justification.

The second *Use* is of Exhortation, to stir up yourselves from these Considerations to think on Death more seriously, and how you may die in the LORD, and to this End we shall propose three Questions, that you would lay your Account to be put to answer at Death.

1. *Think how you will answer the Challenges that Death will readily bring along with it, and urge you for a satisfying Answer unto: Where there hath been a negligent Life there will be many*

many Challenges, yea, where there hath been a diligent Life there will not be Challenges wanting, you would see how to prevent and answer these; I shall instance only five of them.

1. When this comes, thou hast stifled many good Purposes and Resolutions, or suspended the conscientious Use and Practice of them, thou hast delayed and put off from Day to Day the making of thy Peace with God, how wilt thou answer that? When Conscience begins to reflect and look back, and to ask how is all? Is the House out of Order through thy Negligence? Tell me Man, what is the Reason thou made not thy Peace with God sure before this Time? Didst thou shuffle by such and such a Duty when thou wast called to it, and when it was pressed on thee? Why didst thou forbear to mortify such and such a Lust? Consider, O consider, how ye will answer such a Challenge, when you will not dare to adventure on Death, and yet will not be able to put it off. O secure Atheists and Contemners of Godliness, consider in Time what you will say to this. 2. Another Challenge will be this, the Conscience will say, Thou hast been busied in following after some vain Lust, busy about the bigging of a House, about the gathering of some Gear or Riches, about making Conquest of such a Piece of Land, &c No, what will all these advantage thee? And what Profit hast thou of all these Things whereof thou art now ashamed? Why didst thou set thine Eyes on, why bestowed thou so much Labour, and spent

Spent so much Time and Pains on that which cannot satisfy, and that which is not? What good will they then do to thee? It shall be said to thee, Fool, this Night thy soul shall be taken from thee, and then whose shall these Things be? What Advantage is there, or can there possibly be in gaining the whole World, if thou lose thy own Soul? And Oh! what Grounds of such Challenges are there in this Generation? A Thing which when Death comes, will stick to, and gnaw in the Consciences of many of you that hear me this Day, even that you have been cumbred and careful about many Things while in the mean Time, the one Thing necessary hath been postponed and quite neglected.

A third Challenge, the Ground whereof is, alas! very common, will be careles, slothful, and idle trifling away, and mispending of precious Time, and neglecting the great Work of Salvation, easy letting pass, without Improvement, Opportunities of getting Good, and doing good, when you shall look back and ask yourselves, *What we have been doing in this our Day?* And the Conscience will answer and say, You were vainly discoursing or tipling, or vaguing or wandering through the Fields, busied in doing nothing, or worse than nothing; then will you cry, but in vain. O! to have some of these precious Opportunities back again, that we thought little of when we had them; we have passed Thirty or Forty Years Time in the World, and yet are no surer of our Salvation now than when we came into it; but

but we have much more Sin and Guilt than we had; Ah! will some say, we have lived fifty or sixty Years, and yet none of all that Time hath been well spent. A fourth Challenge will be, Folks Formality and Hypocrisy in the Worship of God, that they come to the Church to hear, but slept or wandered, and were nothing careful to profit; that they sat down and prayed, but were not in earnest in it, never sought after the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication. It may be they prayed in their Families, and in secret, but all hath been but formal and hypocritical Work, that they know not what communing with God when the Conscience looks back, and sees that was, they knew not, neither cared to know whether their Persons were accepted, and their Prayers heard, they studied not to be experimentally acquainted with the Life and Power of Godliness. O how sad will this be! and how will it all be got answered? A fifth Challenge will be, Abusing many Means of Grace, and many Mercies and Favours, such as Sabbaths, Sermons, Conferences, &c. That you lived not under *Heathenish* and *Antichristian* Darkness, but where the pure Light of the Gospel shined clearly, that you might have known the right Way and would not, that you might have made use of such an Instrument, of such a Sermon, of such Fellowship, of such a Book, &c. And it would have been better with you, but you did it not, you would not: The Conscience will say, Here you were negligent, there you dallied, here you wearied, and there sat up and gave over, and what

what can you now answer for all? There are many in *Glasgow*, and elsewhere, that will meet with this Challenge, if not with GOD's Judgment for the Sins whereon it is founded; as you would die in the LORD, for CHRIST's sake, study to prevent such Challenges, and to get them scored out by timely turning to GOD in CHRIST, and seriousness in the Way of Faith and Holiness; for assuredly Death will bring along with it many more, and many other Challenges than most have now; while they are alive and in Health, they will prick and bite in another Manner than quickly transient, lighter Touches of Convictions do.

The second Question we would propose, is, *How will you answer some peculiar Temptations that Death will bring along with it?* For Temptations are then more sly and subtle, as Challenges are more loud and piercing, and the Devil is then ordinarily busy, and if Temptations be then yielded unto, he hath almost won the Cause: O consider how you will answer these Temptations, I shall only instance these five Temptations that use to assault and set upon Folks at Death.

The first is a Temptation to fretting against GOD's Dispensation in removing and calling away Persons at such a Time, and under such Circumstances, which fretting flows from an Unwillingness to die.

O! as Enmity will be ready to burst out in being angry at GOD's chopping by Death, at the Man in the Midst of such a Design and Project,

D

or

or before he got such a Bargain ended, such a Purchase made, or such a Child provided for, &c. And if the Devil prevent by this Temptation to fretting and repining at Divine Disposal, it will mar the Fruit of any Thing that might then be expected, and will further estrange you from God, that you cannot come near him; and yet O! how rise is such a Temptation? Study to walk therefore in a sweet Pliableness and Readiness to die, for if you go on following one Design after another, and one wordly Business after another, without this Study, you will be taken unawares, suddenly surprized in the midst of them, as many are, and be in eminent Hazard of being prevailed over by this Temptation, to fretting and grudging at Death's arresting, tho by the great and righteous Judge his Order.

A second Temptation is to Athiesm, for as Folks have lived in Athiesm, so the Devil assaults them by Temptation to Athiesm at their Death, to make them desire Death, and desperately to harden themselves against it, and with a prophane and damnable Sort of Delicacy, *Agag*-like, to throw themselves into the Pit, hence many desperate Souls, who as they tush'd, all along their Life, at the Thoughts of Death, so when Death comes they trouble not themselves with it, but shake off all Fear, and study a Sort of godless Gallantry of Spirit, and seeing they must die, they will die, and will not so much as seem to regard it; but will you
that

that Way out-face the Wrath of God, and dare to laugh at taking the Cup of his Indignation in your Hands? It is true, I grant it is a Piece of God's dreadful justice, that these who have not stood in Awe of him in their Life, should die judicially hardned, but such will meet with a most dreadful Wakening after it.

A third Temptation is to Presumption & Hypocrisy, which prevails especially with civil and formal Professors, that dought never abide to be evened to Hell, nor could never endure to be called natural Folk; as such did presume, and were hypocritical in their Life, so the same Temptation sticks to them, and prevails over them at Death, and they will, it may be, speak something of the Consolations of God with their Mouths, when they have no feeling of them in their Hearts, and of Faith in CHRIST, when yet they never knew the real Exercise of it, and will needs like the foolish Virgins, go forth with the Wife to meet the Bridegroom, keeping their Lamps till their very Death; that same Principle of Hypocrisy that made them dissemble in their Life, will make them speak many good Words for a Name at their Death, therefore beware of it, hunt not after a Name of Religion, and affect not to be accounted, and called somebody, but seek to be sincere, to be really that which you seem to be, and whenever a Challenge comes for this, rather entertain it, and make some good Use of it, than shake it off; for tho you could pass away undiscovered by Man, yet God will find you out, and discover you; and

often, not a few of such Persons and make Discovery of themselves, that a discerning Eye will see them in their own Colours; always I say, take notice of it as a mighty Temptation, when Folk take more Pains to faird and paint their Condition over with fair Words and Shews, than to be real before God, and be upon your Guard against it.

A fourth Temptation is to conceit of Self-righteousness, and which even some holy Men at their Death, have been more troubled with, than any other Temptation, and it prevails much with formal Professors (such as the Pharisees, were) who as they lived in conceit of it, so readily it cleaves to them at Death; such will be ready to say, I thank God, I kepted the Church, I was never heard with my Neighbours, I dealt truly and justly with all Men, it was God's Goodness to me, I was ay on the right Side, I read, prayed and kepted the Sabbath, &c. These are good in themselves, I grant, but not to be laid Weight upon, and lippeden to, neither in Life, nor at Death, as the main Foundation of Salvation and Consolation, therefore guard against it as a Temptation when ever Satan comes to speak a Word to you, in order to Merit or Deserving.

The fifth and last is a Temptation to Doubting, yea, to Desperation, which is not so frequent I grant, yet it prevails with some, who have lived, it may be, very secure in their Life, and when Death comes, the Devil says, You have never sought God in earnest all your Days, and

and now Time is gone, the Door is shut, and he will not hear you; this may through Grace be answered, and it would not be strengthened by refusing the Offer of God's Grace even then especially if God call thick, to say so, and some of the Senses begin to fail, and to be taken away.

The third and last Question is to enquire of you, *What think you will be your Thoughts at Death?* And I shall draw forth this also to four or five.

1. What will you then think of the World, of all it Pleasures, Gains and Honours? In Health and Prosperity, Men have big and high Thoughts of this Vanity and that Vanity, Project and Design, but what will you think of all outward Prosperity, and of Barns full of Corn, of Cellars full of Wine, and of Houses full of Wealth and Riches, of high Places, Honours, Credit and Repute in the World, when Death comes to summon you to leave them all? The Mind will not feed upon them then, the Glory and Splendor of them will then grow dim and dark, they will then lose Blossom and Flower, the Taste and sweet Relish of them will then quite vanish; hath not the Experience of many Men who did swim in Pleasures, and abound in Wealth and Honour, verified the Truth of this? Have they not found *all then to be but Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, and have they not sometimes proclaimed them to be so? Yea, even it may be before Death, when under some great Pain or Sickness, or some quick and sharp Challenge of Conscience;

all the Man's Riches, Pleasures and Honours could not then ease his Mind.

2. What will be your Thoughts of the chiefest Grounds you have to build your Peace on now? You can presume now and have no doubt of your Salvation, but at Death your Grounds will be narrowly sifted, and instead of a solid Assurance, you will scarce get a harling Thought of it, to say so; instead of Faith, you will readily have Doubting, and for Hope you will have Fear: How many at Death have been but beguiling themselves? And will not many of you, if God prevent not, think and say so, when you begin to look on Eternity, and God's Justice, and to find that many Things you have leaned unto, will not then abide the Trial nor be able to bear the Weight of your Soul's Salvation, nor to answer the Challenge which they answered, as it might be in Health. Hence it is, that many at Death will cry for a Minister, and for Prayer, that cared little for their Company, and for that Duty along their Life; and when the Minister is come, they will then tell him they can do nothing, and indeed they can do nothing, till Grace give both freely to will and to do, but this bids you beware of putting off till Death.

3. When you draw near your latter End, and Death comes to sit down on your Eye-lids, when the Eyes and Ears begin to fail, and Eternity stares you in the Face (for I suppose the Persons to have still the Exercise of their judgment) what will be your Thoughts then? May we not imagine the Thoughts of many will be like those of
the

the poor Heathen Emperor *Hadrian*, who bespoke his dislodging Soul thus, *O poor Soul, whether art thou going?* And think with yourselves what you would give for a Sabbath then, for one Sermon then, and when Relations and Neighbours will be weeping about you, and you groaning under a Burden of Sin, and fear of Wrath, and also of Pain and Sicknefs, and fain would you stay, but you may not, the Soul must go, and not one Hour's Delay granted, what think you would you give then, and at that Hour to be suffered to come back again, and stay a while here? And yet that Hour is not far off from many of you, from some not a Year, from other some, it may be, not a Month, yea, possibly not a Week.

4. What think you will be the Condition of the Soul, when it goes out and dislodges from the Body, and when the Sentence shall be passed, and when Legions of Devils shall harl and drag the Soul away to Hell the Place of Torment, that was thinking to go to Heaven. What think you will be the Thoughts of such a Soul, that in the Person's Life-time would have disdained and scorned to hear a Minister or any other, even it to Hell, when it shall thus be unexpectedly seized on, and hurried thither? Do you think Sirs, that there are no Souls in Hell, or that few or none at all run the Hazard of being there eternally? If you will deny neither, but grant both, do not then, think you, all they infinitely wrong themselves, who securely drive over their Time, and think not seriously on their dying in the LORD? which is the Scope of all: This Doc-

trine lays before you Life and Death, Heaven & Hell; If you live and die in CHRIST, you shall get Life and be eternally blessed; but if you live and die in your Sins, instead of Life you shall without all Doubt meet with Death, and such a Death as you heard of in the Lecture, *A Death that hath the Wine of the Wrath of GOD, without Mixture in the Cup of his Indignation, and Torment, even eternal Torment, without any the least Intermission or Mitigation, whereby ye will be made everlastingly most miserable.* Lastly, Is it not, think you, of your unspeakable great Concernment, to think seriously on your living and dying in the LORD before Death come? Let me put this Question to you? *What will be the Thoughts of many in Hell, who have gotten fair Warning of this ere it come? Many of you, if Grace prevent not will then remember better on this Preaching than you will do a Day or two hence; ye may reject and beat back a Word now, but ye will not get it beat back then, but it will take hold on you, it will gall and torment you, The Prophets do not live for ever, says the Prophet Zechariah, Chap. 1. But the Word of the LORD will live for ever; it will take hold of them that despised it, it will take them by the Throat, as it were, and make them gasp eternally. The LORD graciously knocks at your Hearts by this so concerning a Truth, that it may have Access to you, and keep ou from slighting it; Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*



S E R M O N III.

ON REVELATION CHAP. XIV. VER. 13.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, &c.

THERE are some Things of such Concernment, that if we go suitably, singly and seriously about them, we can be hardly too much in them, and therefore these four Things that are called Man's last Things, Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell, have been so frequently recommended to Christians, as the most constant Subjects of their Meditation; and among them all, Death ought to have the first Place in Order, at least it being the Door whereby we enter into Judgment, and as men die so they shall rise, and may expect a final Decision and Sentence from the Judge about their eternal State; and the SPIRIT casting in this to divert *John*, and the Reader a little from following the Series of the History does put a Commendation on it, and says, That it is no Digression for his People to bestow some serious Thoughts upon it.

The last Thing we spoke to, was a Doctrine from the Words as they lie. *That they, and they only are blessed who die in the LORD.* Now ere

we further prosecute the main Uses of the Doctrine, we shall speak a Word to that which is manifestly implied here, and it is this, *That as they are blessed that die in the LORD, so they are exceedingly miserable that die out of him in their Sins, for the affirming of the one implies & supposes the other; & it might follow on the former Doctrine as an Use: However it is clear in the Words, and commends dying in CHRIST to you all, and serves to stir you up to be serious to make that sure, and therefore we beseech, exhort and obtest you to count it of Concernment, even of the greatest Concernment unto you; it is to you Men and Women that we speak, and not to Walls, to Timber and Stones, sleep not, neither let your Minds vague and wander, for we are speaking the Words of Truth, that many of you may be made to find too late.*

In prosecuting of this Doctrine we shall speak a little to the clearing of both the Branches of it, and then come to the Use.

The first Branch is, *That there are many that die not in CHRIST; this is clearly implied in the Words; it is looked upon as a rare Thing, in the spreading of the Gospel, after the Reign of Antichrist, to find People dying in the LORD, as he is a rare, so a happy Man that dies in him.*

The second Branch of it is, *That be they who they will that die not in him, but die out of him in their Sins, they die exceedingly miserable: We shall confirm the First, and then speak to the Explication of the Second.*

For

For the First, *That there are many that die not in CHRIST*, it appears from *Mat. 7. 22.* and from *Luke 13. 24.* These three will confirm him abundantly.

1. The plain Words in Scripture, where CHRIST speaking of Heaven as having for coming to it, *a narrow Way and a strait Gate, so that few enter in thereat*; and of Hell and Destruction, as having, *a wide Gate and a Broad Way, into which many enter*; and when he speaks of the Day of Judgment, he says, *Many shall come to him in that Day, and say, LORD, LORD, open to us: To whom he will say, Depart from me, I never knew you; and he will set the Goats on his left Hand, and send them thence into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* These Scriptures speak not only of such as are without the Church, but also, if not mainly, of many visible Professors, yea, even of such as preached in his Name, and yet say of them, *That they die not in CHRIST.*

2. If you look to the ordinary Connexion that is betwixt Mens living and their dying, you will find that the Way of the most Part of Men declares plainly, *That they die not in the LORD*; for as we shewed, Mens being and living in CHRIST, must preceed their living and dying in him, before they can die in him, they must needs be in him: We do not say, that all must be and live so many Years in him before they can die in him, but that they must be sometime in him before they can die in him, and that they must live and put forth some Acts and Breathings of a Spiritual Life, of
the

the Life of Faith in him, if it were but a few Words of GOD's Glory, and for others Edification, or a few Sighs, Groans and Looks to him, as we may see the Thief on the Cross though his Time was very short : And if this being and living in CHRIST must precede dying in him, if we compare it with the most Part of our Lives, ah! how sad a Prognostick gives it of what is like to be your Way of Dying? How many are there of you that live still in black Nature and were never born again? If I could class the Lives of the most Part, I would essay it.

1. How many are living like Athiests, not calling upon GOD at all, casting off Fear, and restraining Prayer before him? And as these live, so they die for the most Part, either securely, or desperately.

2. How many live in Formality, and never knew what it was to mortify the Flesh, or sincerely to aim at the Power of Godliness, and yet faith the HOLY GHOST, *Rom. 8. 13. If ye live after the Flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the SPIRIT mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live.* If Grace be not in the Heart, and kithe not at all in the Conversation, ye cannot warrantably expect to die in CHRIST, *Except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* This is a large and great Class, and takes in a l that live and die as they were born, and seek not after another Life than that which they brought with them into the World.

3. How many are there that have some outward

ward Fairing and Painting, and yet have no Reality of Religion within? Whereby they mock GOD, and dissemble with Men. It is to such that CHRIST speaks, *John 8. 21.* And tells them, *that they shall die in their Sins*, and against this Sort of Men he denounceth many Woes.

4. Are there not many that live without Faith in CHRIST? without which they cannot possibly please GOD, neither living nor dying, and shall be damned if they continue so, for faith the LORD, *John 3. 18. He that believeth not is condemned already.* Now when all these Classes are laid aside there will be but few behind; all which proves abundantly the Truth of the Thing, and that there is but too good Ground to believe there are many, very many who die not in CHRIST.

A third Ground of Confirmation of this sad Truth, may be drawn from the ordinary Way that most Part die in, and pass out of Time into Eternity. O how many die securely, stupidly & as we said before, senselessly, and are no more affected with the Thoughts of the immortality of their Souls, than if they had none at all? How many die presumptuously confident? How many found their Faith of dying well on wrong Grounds? How many die doubting, not knowing what shall become of them? And how many die desperately? So that, alas! there are but few among us, that close their Eyes like dying Persons in CHRIST.

And though we will not be peremptor in passing Judgment upon, or in censuring of particular Persons, as to their final State, yet all this
shews

shews that it is not very common, nor ordinary to die in the LORD.

As to the second Branch of the Doctrine, to wit, *That these who die out of CHRIST in their Sins, die in exceeding great Misery.* It is also clear, for as the Happiness of them that die in CHRIST is unexpressibly great, so the Misery and Unhappiness of them that die not in him, is also unexpressible, for they are excluded and shut out from God, and from all Good, and have his Wrath, his furious Indignation, and his most severe Justice pursuing them for ever and ever. We shall only consider it briefly in these two Generals.

1. They are put out and secluded from the greatest Happiness that can be imagined, and that in all the Degrees of it.

2. They are concluded, and put under the greatest Misery that can be conceived, and that in all the Degrees of it.

1. I say, They are shut out from the greatest Happiness, and that is from the Fellowship of God, who is the chief Good, from conversing with the Lamb, glorious Angels, and Saints, they shall not have one Saint in all their Company, there is not nor shall be the least Evidence of the Love of God, among all the Thousands in Hell, not one Drop of cold Water to cool the Tongue of any of them who are tormented in these Flames, *They have Judgment without the least Mixture of Mercy,* James 1. 13. and that for ever without Intermission: They shall never have the least Glimmering of Light, nor the least

least Slaking or Mitigation of their Pain, they shall have no Rest, Night nor Day; and which aggravateth all, even to the very Height and Extremity, they have no Outgate, nor Hope of it, but lie in utter Desperation under the felt eternal Torment. It would be some lightning to the Damned in Hell, if their Torments were to continue but some thousands of Years; yea, if but for some millions of thousands of Years, as poor *Spiras* said, that would have been a Comfort to him, if Hell had been for Twenty thousand Years; but it is for ever. And

2. If we look to the other Part of it, they are in this hopeless Condition, under the greatest Misery, drinking for ever of the Wine of the Wrath of God without Mixture in the Cup of his Indignation, which shall be both their Meat and their Drink, and their Company shall be the Devil and his Angels. O that we were serious in speaking and hearing, and thinking on these Things. The Odds and Difference is both great and strange, instead of sharing in the Glory of God, of CHRIST, and of his Angels, to be sharing of the Torment of the Devil and his Angels: If it be a very Evil, nay the very worst Condition, for a Person to have Enmity at God in the Height, and to have God an everlasting irreconcilable Enemy, furiously pursuing his Quarrel, though without all Passion in him, yet with wonderful Horror in the Person that is thus plagued, it cannot sure be told to the full, how inconceivably evil and miserable their Condition

dition is that die out of CHRIST, nor what the Hazard is that many of you are in, in reference to it.

The first *Use* of this is, for exhorting you not to think it of light or little Concernment how you die, nor a Thing unworthy of your most serious and painful Endeavours to be made sure on good Grounds that you shall die in him: If it be of great Concernment to get Heaven, and to escape Hell, to be in GOD's Company, and not in the Devil's for ever, to have Love, and not Hatred of GOD for ever, and to have GOD's Love to you and not his Hatred for ever, (for Death casts the Balance;) set, O set yourselves seriously to obtain the one, and eschew the other; and there is no Way to win at it, but by being, living and dying in CHRIST.

A second *Use* serves wonderfully to check and reprove the senseless secure Multitude that have the common Profession of the Faith of these Things, and are utterly careless to have this concerning Question clearly, distinctly and convincingly, and satisfyingly answered, *Whether they shall die in the LORD?* Certainly there are many of you, when your Souls shall dislodge, that will find yourselves exceedingly mistaken in this Matter; O! if we would pity and lament over the lamentable Condition of many of you who are senseless, stupid and unconcerned, that whatever is spoken of the Life to come, and of the Necessity of making your Peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST, it is as if it were spoken to so many Stocks or
Stones,

Stones as to any suitable Effect it hath upon you; for who of many of you quite their Profaneness, Formality, Hypocrisy and Security? Who thro Grace mends any Thing Faulty or amiss? Or sets more timeously and seriously about learning this great Lesson, *of dying in the LORD*? The supine, gross and lazy Effect of all which, bids you look for, and lay your Account to meet with the deeper, sorer and sader Challenges at your Death and Appearance before GOD's terrible Tribunal.

But it may be asked here; What is the Reason that so many die out of CHRIST? How can this be, seeing they have no Happiness, but so much and so much Misery by it? How cometh it to pass that so many take the one Way of living, and dying out of him, and so few choose the other Way of living to him, and of dying in him?

To insist long, and at large in answering of this Question; would need to give Reasons why Men shun and decline the Study of Holiness, and will be profane, why they despise the Gospel and embrace the World and their Lusts? But to leave such Gnerals, we shall speak a Word or two more particularly and closely to this, why it is that so few die in the LORD? And the first Reason is this, Because the Faith of these general Truths that there is a Heaven and a Hell, a Life eternal and Judgment to come, is scarcely received by the Multitude of the Hearers of the Gospel, yea, the very Faith of their own dying in particular though they know they will die, and though

Ex-

Experience may teach them the same daily,) sinks not into their Hearts. Who are they that believe practically, and with particular Application, that they will die and come to Judgment; and that they shall be put into an eternally unchangeable Condition after Death? And if this be not indeed believed, then to allude to the Apostle's Words, 1 Cor. 15. *Our preaching is in vain, and your Faith is but in vain*, That these Things are not really believed, we hinted before when we began to speak on these Words, and the Practice of most undeniably proves it: For though all in the World profess they believe that they will die, yet who are they that on the Matter mind not to outlive this Day, and the next Day and the Day following; and so on? So that in Effect it turns to this, they would live eternally here; and this is a Root-evil or an evil-Root, that destroys many Souls: Most People are like these spoken of in the Days of Noah, *Matth. 24. Eating and Drinking, Marrying and giving in Marriage, suffering one Day to come and another to go, till Death come and surprise them ere they are aware*, and then they are confounded and put through other, to say so, with the very first Thoughts and Appearance of it: If Men were seriously thinking on Death and Judgment, and a particular Reckoning with God, and were really believing these Things, 'tis impossible they would thus delight themselves in their sinful Lusts and Pleasures, and have their Affections so glued to

a present World? No certainly, the Thoughts of Death and Judgment would put Gall and Wormwood in these Things and imbitter them.

A 2d Reason may be drawn from Peoples gross Mistakes about the right Way of dying, they take dying in the LORD to be quite another Thing than indeed it is; for even as Folk mistake all other Duties, so they mistake this, they take that for Repentance, for Faith and for Holiness, which is not Repentance, nor Faith nor Holiness indeed; so they take that to be dying in the LORD, which is not dying in him. And here we shall touch on two or three Things, which we conceive many take for Dying in the LORD wherein yet they are exceedingly mistaken.

1. They think if they can die without any publick Scandal or known Sin, or without Challenges, and if they can get their presumptuous Conceit and good Opinion of themselves kept up to their Grave (as if it were enough to say, LORD, LORD, *open to us*) and if they can go away calmly and quietly, like these spoken of *Psal. 73. 4. Who have no Bonds in their Death.* that then they are well enough and die well, but this is a great Mistake.

2 They trow they die well, if they die with a Sort of Hope that it shall be well with them, and for this they will toughly debate, and when CHRIST comes and tells them they are beguiled, they will hardly believe him, but rather as it were alledge that he is mistaken
and

and they are not these Men? What, what? *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy Presence, have we not heard thee preach in our Streets,* have we not been at many Preachings and Communions? We have always had a good Hope towards God, and why should we now fear Death? O! the strong Presumption that some die with! And this is another great Mistake. 3. Some think if they can die after some Prayers and Convictions, and that which they think to be Repentance, all will be well; These Things indeed, if they were real, were good; but how many play the Hypocrite egregiously in them? There are not a few that fancy they have the Grace of Repentance, because they have some Sadness for Sin; or some little Anxiety or a few Challenges, who yet never took seriously with the Corruption of their Nature, and the Quarrel that God hath with them on that Account, nor never fly to God for Refuge, but go away in their Fit of carnal Sorrow, and this is another great Mistake.

4. Some lay down a Mould of Religion of their own, and if they have a civil Life with Men, and some Formality of Religion towards God, they think themselves well enough; how many such are there, who will break their Neck at Death? O sad Mistake!

A Third Cause of Folks not dying in CHRIST may be this, that there are many who have some right Thoughts and Apprehensions of dying well but they never seriously endeavour to bring them to Practice, they seek not to have their Practice answerable to their Light, they in Effect, make a

Prisoner of their Light, by putting a Guard of corrupt Affections about it; for either they take an absolute Dispensation to themselves, as to some particular Lust or Sin, or a Liberty for such a time, & when that Time is by, they intend to quit such a Lust, and to think on Death, but they will not quit it yet, nor prepare themselves for dying. They must needs have their Families in such a Posture, they must have their Children or such a Child provided for, and disposed of, they must have such or such a Business put by their Hand first; not knowing or not considering that this hardens them, and that they daily become Slaves to such Things, and that Judgment may surprize them unawares, before their Time come; there are many that will not deny but a strict Way of Holiness is requisite, but they do not, they cannot prevail with themselves yet; and are like that ill and slothful Servant, who because his LORD delayed his coming, went to eat and drink, and to take his Pastime, but his Master come in an Hour when he is not looked for, nor the Servant aware, and on the sudden appoints him his portion with Hypocrites. Ah! is it not thus with the most Part, who if they get such a Sickness put by, or such a cross Dispensation over, they think that CHRIST will bide a while longer, and so still they put off till it becomes too late.

A fourth Cause may be this, That few are serious in going about these Things that concern
Death,

Death, or minding what will be their own Case at Death; few, very few make Conscience to examine themselves, and to search their bygone Ways, and therefore they know not their Hazard; and among many Advantages of Self-examination, this is a special one, That it notably fits thro God's blessing for dying in the LORD, whereas when it is neglected, Souls are kepted still securely sleeping, and Accounts ly uncleared, and unadjusted, they neither distinctly know their Danger, nor the Need of their Remedy, all their Prayers are by guess, and at hap hazard as it were, neither can they comfort themselves in any Duty they go about; we name these Things, not only that you may know them, but that you may shun them, and that you may withal draw some Directions out of them for your Practice.

We come now to a third and Main Use of the general Doctrine, *seeing it is of such main Concernment to die in the LORD, as it hath eternal Happiness depending on it.* Let all of you seriously set yourselves to fall about such a Way of living, as when Death comes you may die in him: As ever you would attain to this Happiness and eschew this Misery, whereof you have been hearing, take I say, such a Way of living as Death may find you in him.

To clear and press this a little, I shall speak a Word to these three Things.

1. Somewhat further to what Dying in the LORD is.

2 To some Rules and Directions that all who would

would solidly comfort themselves in the Hope of dying in the LORD, would make use of and walk by in their Life.

3. To the Necessity of taking these Directions, and walking according to them, even as you would have the Comfort of these that die in the LORD, and of doing this speedily without Delay or dallying.

For the First, We shall not insist in it, having touched on it a little before: What we would say of it now, we shall briefly sum up in these two:

1. To some Things that are in the Affections that accompany a Person that dies in the LORD, or in some Properties that go along with it.

2. In something in the Grounds that these flow from.

For the first, There are these three Things or Properties that go along with dying in the LORD, or with them that die in him, that are exceedingly desirable.

1. A dying willingly and chearfully, not going to Death as to Prison, but as through a Trance to a Palace. 'Tis a dying as old Simeon did, *Luke 2. Now (saith he) lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation.* Tho Death be the King of Terrors, he hasteneth it: or it is a dying as Paul died, who desired to be dissolved and to be with CHRIST which is best of all.

2. It is a dying with holy Confidence & Boldness, not with Fear and Terror and Anxiety, doubtfully disputing what will become of them, but

but being confidently assured of a Mansion in Heaven; *We know*, saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 1. 2. *If the earthly House of this Tabernacle be dissolved, we have a Building of GOD, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens; for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon, with our House which is from Heaven; being confident that at Death his happy Condition was but as it were beginning. To in die CHRIST makes a Man to set himself boldly against Death and all its Terrors.*

3. 'Tis a dying, not only with Peace and Quietness, but with Complacency and Satisfaction, and even so, that if the Soul had its Wish, it desires no more, the Man does not fret nor complain, that he is taken from a good and plentiful Estate, from a fine and commodious Dwelling, from Friends and Relations, from Honour and Repute in the World, &c. But he dies with Contentment, being fully satisfied with his Right, and to look to the fair Inheritance above; this we may see in *David*, who sweetly says and sings, 2 Sam. 23. 5. *This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire, although he wake not my House to grow.* And therefore he will, Psalm 23. Walk resolutely through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and fear none Evil, because the LORD is with him. And indeed it is no small Matter to die these three Ways, willingly, cheerfully, confidently and boldly, and with Quietness, Contentment and Satisfaction.

But

But, secondly, The Grounds that these Three flow from do mainly answer the Question; for 'tis not a counterfit Willingness, nor a natural Boldness or Manliness of Spirit, nor a carnally secure Peace and Quietness flowing from Senselessness, but such Willingness, Boldness and Quietness as come and flow from these pregnant Grounds.

1. From Peace with GOD thro JESUS CHRIST, the Soul being really fled for Refuge to JESUS CHRIST, and committed itself to him; Faith says, that it is a good, sure, thorow and everlasting Bargain, & so the Man rests on it, and hath Peace.

2. From a good Conscience, giving a good Testimony, which is an excellent Ground to come before GOD's Judgment with: The Testimony of a good Conscience, either in respect of an endeavoured harmless blameless Life, or if the Man have not so good a Conscience in that respect, but many Failings, and so many Challenges, yet he hath a good Conscience in respect of its being sprinkled with the Blood of JESUS, thro whom all his Failings and Transgressions are pardoned, which also takes in a good Conscience of sincere Endeavour to study Holiness.

The third Ground is, A lively and distinct Frame of Spirit, whereby Faith hath some present Acting on CHRIST, and on the everlasting Covenant, even in Death, that the Soul is by and by to meet with; we will not say but there is a Difference amongst thir three, the first of them is simply and absolutely necessary; and the

E

second

second is necessary also in one of the two fore-mentioned Respects; the third may not be always necessary (for a Believer may die in the Rage of a Fever, and in a fit of high Distemper, or in a stupified Palsy) yet it is always to be pursued and sought after, with Submission to God's blessed Will, and it conduceth much to the Believer's Confidence and Comfort, to have some present Actings of Faith in a distinct Way on CHRIST, and on the Covenant of Grace.

I suppose now that this is such a sweet Condition to die in, as there is none of you but would desire to be in at your Death; but let me say it, the most Part take not the right Way to attain it.

Therefore in the second Place let me speak a little to these Rules and Directions that you must needs seriously, and in the Strength of Grace endeavour to live by, without which you cannot with well grounded Confidence promise to yourselves these Comforts at Death, and the Blessedness that follows it.

And for the more clear prosecuting of this I shall first, in a Word put by that which is not dying in the LORD. And then secondly, I shall at greater Lenth propose to you the Way where in you should walk, in order to the attaining of this desirable End.

First then, It is not the Way of dying in the LORD, To die in external Quietness, with all our Friends about us, or in a Sort of Calmness with little Pain or Sicknes; many Heathens, many carnal and civil Men, and many Hypocrites have

have died that Way; 'tis but a common outward Thing, and many may and do slip quietly into the Pit. Nor,

2. Is it to be much taken up with bare Wishings and Desirings to die so, nay nor with some Esteem of dying in the LORD; It is good indeed in so far to wish and desire it, and to esteem of it, but *Balaam*, who had a most miserable Exit, and made a very wretched End came this length, *Num. 24.* and yet this is a great Part of many Folks Religion, yea, the almost all of it, who will now and then commend it when in a good Mood. Nor,

3. Is this the Way of dying in the LORD, To have some coldrise Prayers to die so, and to be good Friends with God, as we use to speak; there are none so graceless, but seeing that they must needs leave the World, would rather be in Heaven than in Hell, and would readily have some general Desires after it, and Words of Prayer for it, but that will not do the turn, for *many will seek to enter in, but shall not be able, Luke 13 24.* Many will pray to be taken to Heaven that never walked, neither loved to walk in the right Way to it. Nor,

4. Is this the Way of dying in the LORD, *To be taking some Pains in the Externals of Holiness, to be hearing Preachings, and frequenting Communi- ons; if that be all, it will not do the Turn nei- ther:* It will not be sufficient that you heard CHRIST Preach, and sat at one Table with him; halving of Holiness is no Holiness, to be almost a Christian will not make a Christian indeed, there

is a Necessity of being a Christian altogether, to have half Holiness, and to be almost a Christian only, will be but to be half saved, and that will be indeed no Salvation, but will period in eternal Damnation, and so cannot be dying in the LORD. Nor, 5. Is it to die with a Perswasion in our own Mind, but ill grounded, that we are in him, and that all shall be well; many take themselves to be well, and in a good safe Condition, because they trow it, and fancy that they are so, and they are very unwilling and loath to let themselves think ill of themselves. When we speak then of dying in the LORD, it must be such as abide GOD's Trial, and it is not he that commends himself, but he whom GOD commends, that will abide his Trial and be approved.

But *secondly*, What then will do it? may you say, We shall (as we promised) commend to you some Rules to walk by, for attaining this End of dying in the LORD; and ye shall take them in several Directions, but we will not now in the close of this Discourse, enter on the Particulars, only, take this Word in the general, *That all these who propose this End to themselves, would previously take along with them thir three necessary Antecedents.* 1. That they have their Peace made with GOD thro Faith in CHRIST, and that they see well they be not living with a standing Quarrel between GOD and them, for 'tis by Faith that we are united to him, and without Faith we cannot be in him, and so possibly cannot die in him. 2. This would be taken along, not only to have Faith in CHRIST, and our Peace made with GOD through

through him, but to know that we have it, *to know in whom we have believed.* It is true, this is not essential as the former, yet it is hardly possible to die comfortably and confidently without it, therefore Christians are exhorted, *2 Pet. 1. Give diligence to make your Calling & Election sure.*

3. That they be exercised to keep a good Conscience in all Things, and always towards God, and towards Men. 'Tis impossible in an ordinary Way to die well, except Folk endeavour seriously and singly to keep a good Conscience along their Life, and to square the same according to the Rule of the Word, and walk suitable to their Profession: All these three are put together by the Apostle *Peter, 2 Pet. 1. 5.* He wills them to whom he writes, *To add to their Faith the Exercise of all the other Graces of the SPIRIT,* then, *Ver. 20, He exhorts them to give Diligence to make their Calling and Election sure;* and then, by so doing, he assures them, *That an Entry shall be ministered to them into the everlasting Kingdom,* which is as if he had said, By fastning your Faith on CHRIST by the Exercise of Grace, and by studying to make your Calling and Election sure by well doing, a wide Door shall be made to you at Death to enter into Heaven, and you shall have the greater Comfort and Confidence to lay down your Life; whereas, on the contrary, when Christians do much neglect the fastning and fixing of their Faith, the Exercise of Grace, and the making of their Calling and Election sure, the Entry is strait and difficult, and others

that altogether neglect these Things, do find the Door quite shut and no entry at all: If there were no more spoken but these three Words, To be in CHRIST by Faith, to live in him by the Exercise of Faith & other Graces, keeping a good Conscience towards God and Man, and to make your Calling and Election sure, they may furnish you with Work and Duty to take up all your Days, and they may also serve to convince and reprove many, who vainly entertain themselves with the Hope & Expectation of dying in CHRIST, but do not at all betake themselves to this Way of being and living in him, even to go with a blacked Face and stopped Mouth to the Throne of Grace, and cordially close with CHRIST's Offer, being content to adhere to him for Righteousness and utterly to renounce their own, and then in a Way of Diligence in Duty, and by the Fruits of a new Nature and Life, to evidence their Union with him; this is the very Marrow and Substance of what we would be at, and that which is the Hinge of our Salvation, even the right Exercise of Faith for Righteousness, and the right setting ourselves ere Death come, to have the Grounds of our Interest sure and clear; but such of you, as have taken no Pains to walk in this Way, but still walk on, and continue in your own old carnal Way, you cannot warrantably expect the Benefits and Comforts that flow from Faith in CHRIST, and from walking in him; and these are *to die in him, and to reign with him.*

Now God himself bless this Word and make it useful to you.

S E R M O N



S E R M O N IV.

REVELATION CHAP. XIV. VER. 13.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, etc.

IT is an easy Matter to speak and hear of the most spiritual and highly concerning Truths, in Comparison of what it is to make them practicable, and hence it comes to pass, that so many speak and hear of them, and that so few practise them, and that the nearer that Truths and Duties come to press upon us the Mortification of our Lusts, and to Abstract us from the World, or to prepare us for dying, we are the loather and more reluctant to engage in the Practice of them and to keep close at it. 'Tis a hard and difficult Business to be both living and dying at once; though every Man living may be said to be dying daily, in so far as he is hastning to it; And therefore seeing what follows concerns your Practice, and is the main and most material Use of this great Doctrine, let one & another hearken diligently, and give ear to what we are to say from God on this important Subject, with a serious Purpose and Resolution to practise; for it will not otherwise be of Advantage you, and you would so prepare yourselves through Grace to

hear, as you may firmly resolve to keep that which is of so great and everlasting Concernment to you..

We left the last Occasion at an Use of Exhortation commending to you the right Way of living, so as when Death comes, you may have some well-grounded Hope of dying in the LORD: And we proposed three Things in prosecuting this Use to be spoken of.

1. What we called dying in him, & we shewed it was to have solid Faith, and Clearness of Interest in CHRIST, Cheerfulness and Comfort, Quietness and Satisfaction in dying, a most desirable and comfortable Condition, when we enter the Lists with Death.

We come secondly, to some Directions that are so many Steps in the Way to the attaining of this comfortable End of dying in the LORD; we entered on them in general, and now are to prosecute them a little further, through the Help of God's Grace: Before we could be particular in Directions, we shewed that these three Things behoved to preceed.

1. There would be a flying to CHRIST by Faith, and making Peace with GOD thro him.

2. There will be endeavouring to make our Calling and Election sure by well-doing; for tho our Justification before GOD depend not on our Clearness in this, yet much of our Comfort and Confidence depends on it, and it is no doubt our Duty to labour to make it sure.

3. There would be a holy Walk whereby we may have

have a good Conscience at CHRIST's appearing, for there can never be Boldness and Confidence where there is a stinging Conscience within, and Challenges for sinning against Light.

To proceed then more particularly to these Directions, how to live as they may die well, wherein if we could be large, and say all that might be said on this Purpose, it would lead us to speak of all the Duties of Holiness, and that with a Respect to all the Duties of this Life, Sicknes and Health, Prosperity and Adversity, &c. to our particular and general Callings, and to all Events, for as we carry in these so we may expect to die, but these being general, we shall pass them, and only propose some five or six Directions in order to Mens dying in CHRIST, as the great Scope of this Doctrine.

The first Direction is, Seek to establish yourselves in the Faith of these general Truths that concern your dying, especially to be established and confirmed in the Faith of Death, Judgment and Eternity, wherein it will be either well or ill with you for ever more: And this is not only to have a general Conviction of the Truth of these, but by Meditation to draw them down to particular Application to yourselves that you will die, that after Death you will come to Judgment, and be eternally happy or miserable, for as we said before, one of the great Evils that cherisheth Atheism, is Men's living as if they were never to die; so then 'tis a Foundation of well-doing, solidly to believe Death, Judgment,

and Eternity, and they can never live well who lay not this for a Ground, That they will die, and come to Judgment, and who consider not what will readily be their Challenges at Death, that they may seek to answer them now, and what may be their Temptations, that they may be guarded against them: Therefore you would be established in the Faith of those Generals, and endeavour to draw Death and judgment near to you, you would pursue them close in your Meditation. Suppose that Death were this very Night approaching you, consider with yourselves if you durst appear before God's Tribunal to be judged; more of this in our Thoughts would help us, through God's Blessing, to mortify Lusts, and to give Death little to do when it comes. But the Truth is, the most Part never think seriously on Death, and because they desire not another Life than the present, they shun to think of Death; I commend the Necessity of this to you from the great Averseness that your carnal Hearts and Humours have from the serious and stayed Thoughts of it: I pose you that are given to Pleasure, can you endure to think on dying? And you that are glutting and surfeiting yourselves with the World, can you abide to think on that Word, *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be taken from thee, and whose shall these Things be?* And you that are profane, do you think on that Sound of the Trumpet, *Arise Dead, and come into Judgment.* That Word of *Job* is meet to be carried along with

with you, *I know that thou wilt bring me to Death.* Though the good Man was mistaken in thinking he would die at that Time, yet he knew he would die ere long, and be brought into Judgment after Death, and carried along with him the Thoughts of it : And if we would be induced to try our preparing for Death by these Thoughts, how few would be found to mind it, though it be of everlasting Concernment ? Ah ! how few Hours are taken to think upon it ? If you were to come before Men, or an human Court with a Cause that much concerned you in the World, how would you think of it before hand, and think of it again ? And yet the most momentuous of these are but very Trifles, being compared with this great Cause and Case of Conscience, how you shall die, and appear before the Great G O D his Judgment seat.

The second Direction is, That though all Duties of Holiness be requisite, yet there are some particular Duties that you would in a special Manner make Conscience of (without neglecting any other called for Duty) as having a special Influence on Preparation for dying, and as coming nearest, so to say, to Death, though much slighted. As,

1. The Duty of Self-searching and Examination, we would be very impartial in Self-examination, and computing with God. If Men (as *Solomon* exhorts) should see to the State of their Herds, and of their Flocks, much more should they see to the State of their Souls : Is it possible

sole think you to die confidently and comfortably if you be not acquainted with the state of your spiritual Affairs, and endeavour not to have your Accounts with GOD stated and adjusted? If there be Plague on Men, it is in the Neglect of this, and if there be an Awe-band and Restraint on their Spirits from unsuitable Latitude and Loosness, it is the conscionable Practice of this Duty; that which makes Death so terrible to many, is their living some 30, some 40, some 50, some 60 Years without ever having endeavoured to fit their Accounts with GOD, let be to have them discharged.

2. The Exercise of Repentance (which is, alas! a rare Thing even among Christians in these Days) is a special Duty to be gone about in order to our dying in CHRIST, that when we see ourselves wrong in any Thing (as many Wrongs may be easily found in the formentioned Search) we let them not ly over, but be earnest with GOD till we get a Discharge, and that cannot be gotten till Repentance be exercised; where this Grace of Repentance is, it hath Faith always with it, and it maketh the Heart tender, and removes Challenges which makes Death terrible; it is also a great Enemy to Security, Presumption and Pride, and keeps the Heart melting, and much in pouring out itself before GOD; the Want whereof in these Days kithes in the Coldness of our Duties of Worship, and in the Carnalness of our Walk; however they that die in the LORD, would study

to be found much in the Exercise of this Grace (we do here indifferently design these Duties or Graces) for if Repentance be called for when the Kingdom of Heaven is near, there is nothing more requisite than a kindly penitent Heart, as a Spur to chase to JESUS CHRIST, when we are to meet with him at Death.

3. A third Duty is the Exercise of Mortification. It is a painful, but a profitable Duty to be crucified to the World, to die to our Lusts and carnal Delights; by Mortification, we mean not only that which takes away the Dominion of Sin, which lessens the Study of Holiness, but that which plucks up the Roots and Tapons of Sin, and slays the Motions of it, and as it were, weeds it out of the Heart; that which puts you to mortify your Distempers and Passions of Envy, Anger, Pride, inordinate Desires, &c. and to seek to have your Affections heavenly, which notably fits for dying in the LORD.

A fourth Duty that would be carefully practised, is Sobriety, *Let your Moderation be*, saith the Apostle, *known to all Men, the LORD is at Hand.* Mortification looks much to Things in themselves sinful and unlawful, I say much, though I will not say only, and Sobriety looks to Things lawful in themselves, wherein Insobriety is the Bane and Plague of many, who being so glued to the Things of the World, and to these Delights and Pleasures which are lawful in them

themselves, and whereof a moderate Use is allowed, that they are entangled and fettered with them, and made as unfit for Dying, by their Infobriety in them, as by doing of some Things that are in themselves sinful. O how doth inordinate Love to Children, Friends, Lands, Houses, Farms, Oxen, and to the married Wife, unfit them for dying; therefore the Apostle exhorts Christians, *1 Pet. To gird up the Loins of their Mind, to be sober, and hope to the End.* For when Men are unsober in the Use of the Creatures, they are like to those that have long Garments, which take the Feet from them as it were, and impede them in their walking, and at their Work; when the Affections hang loose and drag on the Earth, and the Mind takes Liberty to vague and rove after these Things, the Man cannot be busy at his main Work, or make Progress in his Journey to Heaven; but Sobriety fits him for his Work, and makes the Way easy to him, makes him well content with his House or Place and Station, and with what ever is his Lot and Condition in the World; it suffers not his Affections to be entangled with them, it makes him so to use this World as not abusing it, as the Apostle Exhorts, *1 Cor. 17. To have a Sort of sanctified Deniedness to a lawful Use of the Creature Comforts, that the Heart be not gluttoned and surfeited with them, from which our blessed LORD JESUS doth most powerfully dissuade, Luke 21. 34. where he saith, Take heed, lest at any Time your Hearts be over-*

ver-

vercharg'd with surfeiting and Drunkenness, & the Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you un-awares: Where he plainly insinuates (which is strange, and little believed and considered) that there is an Overcharge by Cares about the Things of this Life, lawful in themselves, as well undisturbing and unfitting for Death and Judgment, as an Overcharge with Surfeiting and Drunkenness is.

This Sobriety prepares for dying in the LORD; to which Preparation on the contrary, an Overcharge with worldly Cares is a mighty Impediment, as these Words of our LORD put beyond all Debate; especially when these two are trysted together, a distempered Mind with such worldly Cares within, and many Temptations and Stumbling-blocks from without.

A third Direction is, They that would die in the LORD would carry the Thoughts of Death along with them, as if every Day and Moment were their last, and as if they were just now to appear before GOD, and as if they were wholly indifferent what Hour and Moment he would call upon them, for GOD hath set (as to our Knowledge of it) no Time precisely for our living here; 'tis observed by some on *Eccles. 3.* that there is a Time for every Thing, *a Time to be born, and a Time to die, a Time to laugh, and a Time to weep*, but there is none for living, for none can say, I must or shall live to Morrow, therefore he bids the Porter watch, and would have all standing with their Armour on them
in

in a watchful Posture waiting for the LORD's Coming, that he come not on them unawares;

Nunc age quod moriturus agas.

Do that now which thou wouldst be found doing when Death comes, hath been an old and excellent Saying.

It may be objected or queried here, *Is it possible that a Believer can always actually remember CHRIST's Coming.*

Answer, 'Tis in this Duty as in others, as when 'tis said, *Do all to the Glory of God*, 'tis not so to be understood, as if we could actually mind it along in every Thing we do, our Minds being but finite, or so unable actually to mind many Things, and different Things in the same Instant of Time or at once, that it is impossible; but as there is a habitual minding of the Glory of God, so there is an habitual minding of CHRIST's Appearance, which implies these three Things.

1. That when in cold blood, to say so, and at ourselves, we resolve to wait for, and carry our selves suitably to the Expectation of his appearing; which is in Effect to be continually upon our Watch.

2. That when ever we take our selves napping, we stir up our selves to an actual minding of it, and endeavour to square the Actions of our Life accordingly, asking our own Hearts, if we durst do this or that if he were

to appear, and accordingly to be swayed with the Awe of his appearing. That in our ordinary Walk, we be often reviving the Thoughts of CHRIST's appearing, putting ourselves often in Mind of this Rule, even to walk so as if he wdre immediately to appear: Hence Believers are often stiled in Scripture, *Waiters for, and Lovers of his appearing*; and hence also the Duty of Watching is so frequently commended to them: So then we would not have this to be so universally understood, as if Believers were to do nothing more, nor as if it were spoken by a Voice from Heaven, That they would presently die, or that CHRIST were presently to appear, for then they would leave many Actions undone, and leave off lawful journeys and Voyages, and other Actions they are called to, but the Meaning is, *That we endeavour to be found in, or at, nothing we shall think Shame of when he appears, and in all Things always to keep a good Conscience, a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Men.*

A fourth Direction is this, These that would die in the LORD would be timeously acquainting themselves with the Cross of CHRIST, and not seeking after a pampered Life, or to have the World at their Will, but learning to fold, bow and stoop to Difficulties and straits; not that I would have any procure Crosses to themselves, but as they would not procure them, so they would not peremptorily determine to eschew them when the LORD calls to take them on, and bear them up: But,

I. They

1. They would carry along a Resolution to fold to Crosses when they come.

2. When they come, they with sinful Anxiety, seek to shun them; nor would they ly down discouraged under them, but deny themselves, take up their Cross pleasantly and cheerfully, and follow CHRIST.

3. They that have Personal Freedom from Crosses, would kindly sympathize with them that are under the Cross. Hence Solomon says, *That it is better to be in the House of Mourning than in the House of Feasting*, Eccl. 7. 2. There is a greater Good to be had there nor in the House where there is Banqueting, Revelling and Carousing: The Reason is, because few living in Prosperity are content and disposed to die, and Adversity doth best loose Folks Grips of the World. O 'tis hard to be glutting in the Things of the World, and to live in a prosperous and plentiful Condition, and not to be withdrawn thereby from spiritual Things: Therefore is the Cross and dying to the World so much commended: So little Crosses are, as it were Bits for Death, so are little Deaths and Pieces of the Curse, as well as Death itself; tho by the Death of CHRIST they are turned into Blessings to Believers; And if we be habituate to these little Deaths, there will be a much easier yielding to the great Death, and less to do when it comes.

A fifth Direction is, That we study to die daily; and it is drawn from the Apostle's Words,

1 Cor.

1 Cor. 15. 31. I protest by your rejoicing which I have in CHRIST JESUS our LORD, I die daily; which not only sets out this Hazard daily, but his seeking to prevent Death, in dying while he was living, and ere Death come; and it implies.

1. A Conviction carried along with him of the Necessity of dying.

2. A looking on the continual Hazard of dying.

3. A Preparation for, and a continual Readiness to die. And,

4. An Activeness in essaying to die; or an acting of Death in a Manner before Death come.

We would follow the same Way and *be frequently putting ourselves before God's Bar, & considering how we will answer Death's Call*, bowing our stubborn Humour, that it may not be found untractable at Death, doing that every Day that we would be found doing when Death comes, studying to have all Things in Order that we would desire to have them in then, and habituating ourselves (as I said) to dying; when going to our Prayers in the Morning to put ourselves in such a Posture as if we were no more to go abroad in the World, and lying down at Night, as if we were not to rise again in the Morning, and when we speak or do, to speak and do like Men that have not long Time to live after our speaking or doing.

The sixth and last Direction shall be this, That you would put in Practice what your own Conscience, your Light according to the Scriptures,

tures, and the Means you have hold out as necessary for making and keeping of their Peace with God, and the keeping off a Quarrel betwixt him and you. This ordinarily is one of the main Challenges that meets Folk at Death, that they have suspended the Practice of many Things they are convinced of, that they have shifted, delayed and put off Seasons and Opportunities of called for Duties, and have sitten down on this Side of them; that they have not reformed such Faults as they were convinced of, &c. It is commonly said of Laws, That we had need of one Law to put other good Laws in execution, and so have we need of some one Direction to help us to make other Directions practicable, according to that Word, *Eccles. 9. 10. Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might, for there is no Work, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom, nor Device in the Grave whither thou goest*, we are all passing on towards our Grave, and there is no doing of Duties, nor mending of Faults there: Therefore, whatever the Light of the Word, and of our Conscience well informed thereby, clears to be Duty, we would be serious and diligent in doing of it, and in the doing of it without delay; and if this one Thing were made Conscience of, it would do more, through God's Blessing than many; your Consciences are convinced, I suppose, that the former Directions are very helpful, and that such as thus live will die the better; but alas many of you do not so much as think on them, let be practise them; it may be they shall

not

not be in your Thoughts till this Day eight Days, and when it is so, to what Purpose are all Directions, for what use serve they? Are they not, think you, useless unless they be put in Practice? Therefore put not this by as a Thing of little Concernment, Death is the Door to Heaven, and Death is at the Door; and living well is the Way to dying well, and as you would live & die in the LORD, you would lay Weight on these Directions, and fall about the Practice of them in Strength of his own Grace.

But before we proceed any further, though there may be a Conviction that what hath been said is all true; yet there will be an inward Murmuring against it with many profane Persons, and readily two Objections will be started by such.

The first Objection will probably be this, If none die well but such as betake themselves to such a Way of living, who will, or can die well? Such a Life is impossible to us, therefore we will hold on in our own Way & hope well, many when they hear such Doctrine are ready to think, & say, as they did, *John 6.* who after they had murmured at CHRIST's Discourse, said, Verse 41. *This is a hard Saying, who can bear it?* We shall by this Means, will they say, be restrained in our Liberty, we shall thus be put to haunt always the House of mourning, and never suffered once to laugh or smile; although that be not our meaning to keep Men from being merry and cheerful when

when called to be so, but to keep from being carnal, and to set just Bounds to them in their Mirth.

But for Answer to these Questions, we would first ask them a Question.

Is this the Truth of GOD, that such as would die in him, must aim and endeavour to live as we have said? Is living well the Way to dying well, and dying well the Gate to Glory? If so, will it then, think you, be a satisfying Answer to GOD, to tell him, that though this Way of living is the Way chalked out by thee for dying well, yet we cannot close with it, we cannot walk in it, 'tis so uneasy and so narrow a Way? If it be GOD's Will, why put you it off so? Or will you carve out another Way than GOD has carved out to you.

2. Let me ask such, Is not the Gate strait, and the Way narrow that leads to Heaven and eternal Life? Will you not therefore go to Heaven through such a Gate and Way? And is not the Way of living so as to die well, and in the LORD, the Way to Heaven, and must it not have Difficulty in it?

And yet *Thirdly*, Let me say to such, That this Way is but difficult and uneasy to corrupt Nature, to a proud and carnally delicate Heart, that cannot endure in the least to be disquieted in the Enjoyment of its sensual Pleasures and Delights, and to a sinful selfish Humour, that will not stoop to GOD; yet to such as love to walk in this Way, all the Duties are possible, and the

Dis-

difficulties superable through Grace; yea, it is throughout a pleasant Path and Way, *Phil. 4. 13.*

Prov. 3. 17.

They will *secondly* object, All yonder Things the Man speaks of may be true, nay we cannot deny but they are true, yet we may be doing, and yet hope through GOD's Mercy to win to Heaven: Have not many who have lived even as we do, died well, and been saved. And such will readily have the Thief on the Cross to cast up, which would in Reason, speak to them for their reclaiming; and from this they profanely conclude, that they may hold on their own Way, and yet hope to mend and grow better at length, and so get Mercy when they die; but for Answer.

1. O thou graceless and profane Wretch, is that the Use thou makes of Mercy, even to sin because God is merciful, and to sin that Grace may abound? Is that the End of God's revealing his Grace and Mercy, to make him a Minister of Sin? How can you look Mercy in the Face that so abuse Mercy? And yet, O! how rise is this among profane Souls, to sin because God is merciful, to abuse his Grace, and make him, as I said, a Minister of Sin:—Consider of it, if ye will dare to look Grace and Mercy in the Face, that have thus stumbled and broken your Necks on them.

Secondly, Though there be some that God hath given Mercy to at their Death, yet how many are they who have sinned presumptuously and

and have gotten Mercy? The Tnicf on the Crofs, 'tis true, got Mercy, but did he ever de-
spife GOD's Grace and Mercy as you do? 'Tis
one Thing to fin out of Infirmitie, and humbly
to pray for, and to expect Mercy, and another
Thing to fit Warnings, and profanely turn the
Grace of GOD into Wantonness, and yet have a
presumptuous Hope of Mercy.

Thirdly, How many are there in Hell, and
how few are there in Heaven, who have lived as
you do? GOD's Judgments have come upon them
and surprised them, so that they got never leave
to repent nor seek after GOD's Mercy, and they
are now smarting for delaying to embrace the
Offers of Mercy, and for there despising of it,
and cannot mend it? How many are like the
rich Glutton crying in the Place of Torment,
who, if they were permitted to speak to you,
would say, *Go tell these our Brethren, that they put
not off Time, that they dally not in their Day with the
Offers of Grace and Mercy as we did, lest they come
into this Place of Torment with us.*

Fourthly, Who ever got Mercy to whom their
Sins hath not been bitter to them? And will
you continue in that which hath been bitter to
others?

If ever you get Mercy you must come to it
through the Way of Repentance, and by weep-
ing Crofs, to say so; and it shall be more bitter
to you soon or since, than all the Pleasure you
had in Sin, was ever sweet you.

The third and last Thing to be spoken to, is
some few Considerations, to press the Necessity of
taking

taking according to these Rules, that they may not be unfruitful Hearers, but doers of this Truth; for it is the Practice that is the Life of Religion, and if any thing ought to be Practised, sure this is it, even to learn the right Art of dying in the LORD: And therefore, that you may not decline it, Consider,

First, Whether or not the Authority of GOD, & of his SON JESUS CHRIST lays on this Doctrine, if there be a Command for it, that all that expects a Dying in CHRIST, should live in him; and if to die in him be a Duty, then to make use of these Means and Directions that conduce to it must likewise be a commanded Duty, and these must be true and faithful Sayings of GOD; it is a Wonder that you can have any Thing to say against them, for you cannot deny them to be the Truths of GOD, and yet as it is *Psal. 50.* yea (many of you I mean) cast them behind your Back, you will not, it may be, bow a knee to GOD in Prayer when you go home, you will not so much as ask yourselves what Posture your Souls is in, for all that hath been or can be said; remember that you will have GOD, and not us to make an Account unto; and therefore any of you that have Consciences, and any the least Measure of Tenderness in them, mind these Duties, or know that you shall, will ye nill ye be the more inexcusable; If we dare confidently press any Truth upon you, it is this, anent dying in CHRIST, and Holiness as the Way to it, as the Sum and Scope of all our Preaching, which will only do you good as it works to this End.

F

And

And therefore, let us with all Earnestness obtest you to think more seriously on your dying in CHRIST, and in order to that, on your living in him and to him, that you may have Boldness at his appearing, otherwise, we do seriously and solemnly protest unto you in the Name of God, that you shall never see his blessed Face, nor enjoy his blessed fellowship.

The *second* Consideration is taken from your own great Advantage, and the mighty Concernment that is in giving Obedience to these Directions; though there be a second Death to them who make not ready for the first, yet there is but one Death to you all, as to the final Sentence, and upon this depends Heaven and Hell, and the eternal Condition of your immortal Souls, whether they shall be under the Curse of God, drinking of the Cup of his Wrath together; or under his Blessing, drinking the Cup of his Love together: Whether they shall be in the Case of Enemies, or in the Case of Friends; whether they shall enjoy God's Company, or have the Company of Devils; and think you there is no Odds or Difference betwixt these two, Blessedness and Misery; and are you not concerned which of these two shall befall you, and be your Lot for evermore; are you Beasts that have no immortal Souls? Or are you Heathens that never heard of the right Way to Heaven and Happiness, that you should thus walk on in the Broad Way that leads to Hell and Destruction, and turn your Back upon the narrow Way, because it is narrow, and so wilfully precipitate
your-

yourselfes into the bottomless Pit, and into the deep Gulph of GOD's Wrath and Curse for ever? How little soever you may think of these Things now, yet you shall, if you look not to it, to your eternal Cost, find the certain and sad Truth of it one Day.

A *Third* Consideration is drawn from the great Work that here is about Death, and when it comes to dying, and when the immortal Souls must be dislodged and leave the Body, and will not possibly be kept any longer in it: You never made such a Voyage, you never had such a Piece of Work in hand as this will be found to be, when Infirmities of the Body grow on you apace, and at a great Height, when the Incombrances and Fashry, to say so, of the Things of the World, when the Affection of Relations and Friends, when eternity is staring you in the Face, when the Devil the great Accuser, not only of the Brethren, but of all Men, with his Libel waiting on, when the Law in it is passing the Sentence, and cursing every Transgressor, when CHRIST's dreadful Sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed*, &c. are all to meet with and be encountered at once; and when the Conscience within will be clamouring to you, that you were not at all solicitous and careful to eschew that sad sentence: And besides all these, you will have a greater Party to deal with than your Conscience, even the great GOD, the just and righteous Judge of all the Earth, and O but it is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living GOD, and when withal you shall have a

Multitude of Challenges and Temptations to enter the Lists with, this will be found another sort of Thing than a Journey to *London*, or a Voyage to *Holland*, *France* or *Spain*, or to the *East* or *West Indies*; and think you who have put by, and spent all your Life in Vanity that an Hour or Two, or a little Time before Death, will be enough for preparing you to encounter with it? O sad and Soul ruining Mistake! are there not many poor wretched Souls when Death comes who are forced to Wish, *Oh if we had another Life-time to live, we would spend it better!* And with such a Wish as that, poor Souls, they slip away.

Consider *Fourthly*, The Connexion that God hath established betwixt our dying in the LORD and the following of these Directions, betwixt Holiness and Happiness; now Holiness is not the speaking of some few Words, when you come to die, otherwise, why should it be so much pressed in your Life. The End of Holiness is Heaven and Happiness, and the End of the Broad-way of Profanity and Formality, is Hell and Destruction. 'Tis true, as I have often said, that God may pluck some by a Miracle of his Grace out of the Broad-way at their Death, but they are very few with whom he deals so, the Way of Destruction is broad and easy, and many walk in it: O how is this Road beaten by Multitudes of Passengers, and usually as Men live, so they die; if they live wickedly, they die accursedly and fall into Perdition, hence is that Proverb, *Such a Life, such an End*; a Man that

is worldly-minded or presumptuous and self-conceited in this Life, ordinarily dies so; and when you promise to yourself a comfortable Death if you live profanely or hypocritically; be not deceived, God will not be mocked, *for if you sow to the Flesh along your Life, you shall most certainly of the Flesh reap Corruption at your Death.* O know therefore, and believe the absolute Necessity of living well, of living in and to the LORD, if you would die well and in the LORD.

Fifthly, Consider and think seriously upon the great Hazard you are in of spiritual Judgments, if so be you neglect Holiness, and the following of these Directions in your Life; be afraid of blinding, hardning, of Delusion, of a reprobate Mind, &c. Afraid, that though you should get a long Time before Death, that yet you may never get Grace to repent, who thus delay and put it off so long; if you then would die well, and prevent such Plagues, live holily, or if ye care not to die miserably, go on in your Profanity or in your Presumption, notwithstanding of the Hazard of being thus plagued, and of perishing at the last in the fancied Hope of Mercy, for one of these Ways you must live and die; but we say again, consider what spiritual Judgment you may fall under in your delaying, you know not but a Commission may come forth from God by his Word and Messengers, to make your Heart fat, your Eyes blind, and your Ears heavy, &c.

Such a sad Commission as the Prophet *Iſaiah* gets in the ſixth Chapter of his Prophecy, to many of his then Hearers: It may be a Challenge hath been reſiſted, or a Motion of the Spirit quenched at this very Time, and who knows but you may never henceforth meet with another that will do you good? Are there not many Judgments of this kind rained on Sinners daily? Are not many preached blind, deaf and hard, ſo that the plainest, clearest and moſt home-pressed Truths, have no more Influence on them, than upon any Stocks or Stones? And whence is this I pray? Is it not from your own not making uſe of the Light holden forth to you, from this Word of GOD, and from reſiſting, ſtiſing and ſmothering of Challenges and Motions of the SPIRIT ye have had? becauſe of which GOD ſmites you with Senſeleſneſs.

Sixthly, Conſider what poſſible Advantage there is or can be in delaying this ſo neceſſary a Work, and what certain prejudice there is in it;

Fiſt, There is no Advantage, for the longer you continue to delay, you are ſtill the further behind, and the further out of the Way, and the greater will be the Difficulty to get yourſelves recovered, there will be ſtill more Guilt contracted, and more Challenges to deal with, and the greater Labour to get your Spirits put in a good Frame, which you have ſo much and ſo long diſtempered: Yea, it will be a Piece of a begun Hell to you, when you conſider how you have brought yourſelves to
ſuch

such a woful Necessity of haltering, mangling and spoiling all that Work and Business, that, ye should have gone about so deliberately, orderly, timeously and carefully in the Time of your Health; so that all your Advantage will be more Sin, and that will bring on a greater Heap of desperate Sorrow and Wrath.

Secondly, You will not only have no Advantage, but you will have much Prejudice by it, for beside what hath been said, you cannot comfortably answer Death's Call and Summons to appear before the Tribunal of the great Judge: How many of you, if you were to die just now, and never to go out of this Church alive, how many are there, I say, of you that would not have Peace and Comfort at your Death? If the Walls of this House were shaking, would not Horror take hold on you, as Pangs of a Woman in Travel? It may be, some that are Believers in CHRIST would be somewhat disquieted, and a little surpris'd, yet they would soon, through Grace recollect themselves, and be compos'd, but could the most of you lay down your Life with Peace, Calmness and Comfort, if Death should thus come upon you, now or before to Morrow? And you are not sure but it may, for you know not what may befall you ere you go home; nor when you ly down, if ever you shall rise again: And is it possible that you can have Peace and Comfort on solid Grounds, when Death comes, if you be not found having your Peace made with GOD, thro JESUS CHRIST, and walking in the Way of Holiness? It will be but

poor and cold Comfort then, to think that you have made such an advantageous Bargain in the World, that you have such a Land Estate, or so much Money, such a commodious Dwelling-house, so fine Orch-yards or Gardens, or such a well furnished Shop, &c. that one Word will marr all thy Comfort, Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee, and whose then shall all these Things be?

Seventhly, Consider the particular Crosses, Infirmities and Afflictions you are under, or may be shortly under, which may put you in mind of dying, and invite you to make a change to the better; now you are in Health, within a little you may fall sick; now you are in Safety, and by and by you may be in Hazard; do not so many Changes call on you aloud to make for an unchangeable State, and to endeavour to make sure that it may be a happy one.

And now when we have spoken both to Directions and Considerations, pressing and enforcing the Practice of them for ordering our Life and Walk with a due regard to dying, and to dying in the Lord; we are afraid it shall be but as Water spilt upon the Ground, and but little further the Conviction and Edification of many of us, which God only can prevent, and therefore I shall speak a Word to two Sorts of you.

The *first* is, To you that are stricken deaf and dead with the spiritual Judgments of God; who no more regard and mind your immortal Souls than if you had none at all; who live rather
like

like Beasts than like rational Men and Women, or like Pagans rather than like Christians, what through carnal Jovialty and Mirth in some, what through Profanity and mocking of Piety in other some, what through Idleness in a third Sort, what through earthly mindedness, and groveling in the World that is in a fourth Sort, and what through Security, Formality and Hypocrisy that reigns in the greatest Part: I assure you, in the Name of the LORD, that Death is coming and God will not be mocked, as you sow, so shall you reap: Think you it sufficient Preparation for Death, or a suitable Readiness to die, to laugh and sport and play over your Time, or to have your Buildings going up, and your Bargains going on? Beguile not yourselves, there is a Reckoning quickly coming, which will be very sad, and many of you will find yourselves behind, and at a Loss in the main Business. Do not think, Sirs, we speak these Words for the Fashion, your Case requires them all, and therefore yet again, as you would eschew the Evil and Misery that follows the slighting of such a Warning, do not put it easily and slightly by you, for the LORD's sake, for it is hugely above all your greatest Concerns in the World, to look for Death and provide for it.

The Second Word shall be to you, That through Grace have begun to provide for it; and are fallen slack, remiss and negligent, O! be alarmed and roused up to Diligence. Alas!

but few carefully and conscionably study the Art of dying well, and in the LORD, and take any tolerable Measure as they ought, for their appearing before CHRIST's Tribunal: Look Christians to the Tract of the best of your Lives, and how unsuitable it is, and how short of that it should be; there is, alas! much Carnalness, Ruggedness and untenderness amongst us, much Formality & Overlines in Duties of Worship, much earthly-Mindedness, much Passion, much Pride and Vanity, 'tis a Wonder that any, who have the Faith of their appearing before GOD, should dare to play such untender Pranks (to say so) and to take such unsuitable Latitudes to themselves besides the Rule, and to have so gross, so carnal, and so uncircumspect a Walk as many of us have: Study more Tenderness, Christians for the LORD's sake, otherwise, though you will arrive at last safe at that Harbour of Rest, prepared for the People of God, yet you may, and probably will have a very unpleasant and uncomfortable Voyage, not without several Tempests and Storms, sometimes threatening utter Shipwrack, find a very strait and difficult entring into the Port; When Death cometh to look you in the Face, and when you think of your being so near to Appearance before God, you may be in considerable Fear. Now the LORD himself, whose Word this is, make it effectual for your Edification and Advantage though JESUS CHRIST.



S E R M O N V.

REVELATION CHAP. XIV. VER. 13.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, &c.

IT hath been an old Saying of many, *That none can be called blessed before their Death*; though possible in that Sense many Heathens took it, it be not found; yet we who are Christians, may say, If Death be not taken in, and if a Man be not blessed at his Death, he is not blest at all, & tho Death, after a short While's abode in the World, puts Men out of Time, yet it hath a long Train of eternal Consequences following it; Appearance before GOD in Judgment, and everlasting Well or Ill being, are no trivial nor light Matters; and yet as Men close their Eyes in time of Death, so they may expect the Misery or Comfort that Judgment and eternity will bring along with them, and it is the great Scope and Design of this Scripture to commend to you dying well, from the Blessedness that accompanies and follows it.

We were in the Forenoon pressing as we could, the Practice of some Directions, how to prepare for Death, and shall now speak a Word
to

to one Question, ere we proceed to make any further use of the Doctrine, and it is this,

What shall they do at Death who have quite neglected these Directions, or not so much minded them as they should have done, who are brought in a surprize of Providence ere they be aware, near the Border and Brink of Eternity, who have but few Days, or rather Hours to live, and cannot promise one to themselves.

A very concerning Question, (and O that Folks would study to prevent it by minding the former Directions in Time) and withal a Difficult Question to answer solidly and cautiously; for indeed it is not easy to speak to dying Persons (whatever many may think of it) who when they are living will not hear; and therefore let none make a wrong Use of what shall be said to the Question, and this certainly is one wrong Use of it to delay Time, and to shift preparing for Death till it come on you; But first put this Question seriously to yourselves; *How you should live, that you may not have such a Question to ask at your Death, and that you may eschew the Anxiety that such a Question hath with it, at such a Time:* You will very readily ask the Question, but heartlessly in Sicknes, who in your Health put it off carelessly till Death surprize you; and therefore, be rather in holy Dread of that Time, when it may be you will scarcely get an Hour to think on the Business, or it may be, get an none to speak to you, to give you Clearness about it, or possibly you may not have Liberty

for

for Pain and Sicknes to think on it, or to hear one speak to you anent it, which should in Reason stir you up by all suitable Means to endeavour to be in a good, meet, and ready Posture, before that Time come.

But to speak a little in Answer to the Question, we shall distinguish Unpreparedness for dying in three Sorts or kinds of it, or there may be three Sorts of Persons that may be surpriz'd by Death in an unprepared Condition, and to each of these we shall speak a Word.

First, There is one Sort which is absolutely and most sinfully so, that never take any Pains at all to be prepared for Death till it cometh upon them: We may speak to Stones in the Wall as well as to many of you that are such.

A *second* Sort is, of these who have had some Tenderneſs, but they are fallen slack, negligent, and out of a good Frame.

A *third* Sort is, of such as want Feeling, and Comfort, and are without Clearness of their Interest, and fear to die in that Condition.

As for the first Sort, we may say to you, It is no wonder that you slip away securely, & fall into the Pit of Destruction, that live senselessly and Rudely, till Death come upon you, you that never think on Death till ye & it meet, what can ye expect should be spoken to you, for your Comfort? Always we shall lay down some Grounds to be made use of, even in such a deplorable & desperate
like

like Condition, when Men have quite neglected Preparation for Death in their Health, if such have but one Hour to live, they would consider;

First, That Repentance is then possibly attainable, they are within trifling Terms with God as long as they are within the Land of the Living, and the Sentence not past.

Secondly, That there is then no Peace to be had with GOD, but in the same Way it is gotten now, that is by Faith in JESUS CHRIST, which goes along with Repentance, and by Folks betaking themselves to a new Way of living, were it but for a sincere Resolution, CHRIST *is the Way, the Truth and the Life, none can come to the Father but by him*: And without Faith there is no Union with him, and whosoever look for eternal Life, must have it thro Faith in him.

Thirdly, That though a Person were to live but one Hour, somewhat of these must be, some Faith, some Repentance, some endeavoured Clearness of Interest, some Peace, some Holiness, though it were but in Bud, so as to speak but a few Words to God, or to others standing by, as we may see of the Thief on the Cross. Grace wherever it comes, were it but one Hour's Age or Standing, is Grace, and hath the same virtual substantial Fruits, or Fruits in the Bud, as I said, that Grace of older Age and longer standing hath.

Yet, *Fourthly*, Where short Time is, there is need there be some Difference from what is ordinary in the Death of Christians of longer stand.

standing in the State of Grace, in pursuing of these Things ;

1st. In respect of Time to go the speedilier through them, that is, to run as it were the more swiftly and speedily through Repentance and Self-examination fleeing to CHRIST, and the Fruits of Holiness : If Time be short, these would be contracted, not that they would be slighted, but there would be endeavouring to put them some Way together ; the LORD saith, *Mat. 11. 12. The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the Violent taketh it by Force.* There must be a Sort of Violence, even in Health in this Matter, but more at Death ; that is, if they get not all Doubts answered, they would know there is an absolute Necessity to be at Christ, which must put them to step over these particular Difficulties ; as the preaching of the Moral Law in *John's* Time, forced People some Way to step over the Ceremonies of the Law to CHRIST, so by Analogy, Persons who have been negligent in their Life, must use the same Violence at Death, they must have sound Repentance and Faith, and by these take themselves to CHRIST speedily, and this Speediness is, as I said, to be understood in respect of Time. These Things fit and qualify for him, and would be made use of speedily to unite to him.

2^{dly}, A Difference would be in respect of the Measure, though Repentance be in this Case shorter, the Humiliation would be deeper, tho the Challenges be shorter, the Pangs would be

so

be so much the sorer, the Person will be further down in self-loathing and abhorring; Regeneration and the New-birth in such Persons born again so very late, will readily be with the more Pain, and sharper Pangs, with higher Indignation at Sin, and greater Hatred at their own evil Ways, than if they had been sooner regenerated.

Thirdly, There would be a Difference in respect of Eagerness and holy Broudenness, which would be beyond ordinary; 'tis never good to delay Repentance, Faith and Holiness, but yet Folks may come into Heaven with a somewhat slower Pace (to say so) in Health, than when we have put off and delayed these till Sicknes and Death come on them, then they would be in a special Manner always restless till they be at a Point.

Fourthly, Having thus exercised Faith and Repentance, they would die resolving to be the more in free Grace's Common and Debt; for if any of *Adam's* Posterity be obliged to God, and bound to be the very humble Slaves (if I may speak so) of most sovereign Free-Grace, most certainly these Persons are singularly so, who have been rescued and snatched from Death, Hell, Wrath, and the Devil, when he is even ready, and about to lay presently his Hands on them, and pull them to the Pit with him. And now I say again, none that are in such a Condition, nor any of you all, have any the least Ground of Encouragement given from this Doctrine to put off or delay Faith and Repentance, and

and the Study of Holiness, let none therefore take any, lest they be put to smart for their Folly eternally.

As for the *Second Sort* that have more Tenderness, but are backslidden, and fallen negligent, and out of Frame, they are to take the same Way; when Death puts them in a Fright, as it were, and Conscience with Challenges stares them in the Face, they would renew their Repentance and Faith in CHRIST, and the Fruits of Holiness, the more speedily and eagerly, they would be the more humbled, flee the more hastily to their City of Refuge, come with a more stopt Mouth before GOD, and acknowledge Grace to be the Freer, and allow it to have the greater Glory.

As for the *Third Sort*, who have kept up more Tenderness, and would fain have their Interest and Peace clear, and to this Day could never attain to it, or if they once had it clear, 'tis grown somewhat dim and dark, and even in a Manner worn away again, they grow heartless when Death comes and surprises them; to such I would say.

First, That Believers may die without sensible Comfort, and die well, for as sensible Comfort is not essentially necessary to Folks Justification, so neither to their dying in CHRIST: Folks may die sleeping, or in a Distemper, or in a spiritual Fear, and yet that Fear hath Faith and Love in the Bosom of it; and that Condition which mars not Christians Peace once made with God in their Life

Life, and is not sinful, may also be died in; they may be in the Dark and yet die well.

Secondly, Distinguish and put a Difference betwixt the Sense and Joy of the Spirit, and that Comfort and Joy which a Believer may have from God's Word of Promise; Believers both living and dying may want the one and have the other; though they have not the Flowings of the Spirit in sensible Comfort and Joy, yet they may have solid Peace and Consolation, because they have God's Word and Promise to rest on, who have fled to him for their Life, and their Conscience hath an inward Testimony that they have denied their own Righteousness, and betaken themselves to his, and in this they have Peace) else how could a Believer possibly ly down in any Measure of true Quietness under Desertion even for their Trial, it may be more than for their Sin? And if we look to *David's* dying, though we will not peremptorily determine, yet 'tis like he had not so much Comfort, for in these that were called his last Words, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. He betakes himself to God's Covenant, though he did not so feel the Fruits of it, and rests there as at an Anchor.

And therefore, *Thirdly*, They that are in this Condition, would with the more Confidence put themselves in over upon, and within the Compass of the Covenant, and make their Faith liker, because they want sensible Comfort; and readily it is, and will be so with Believers at that Time, for then they are most out of Conceit with

with their own Righteousness, and in an holy Fear and Sollicitude in themselves; for as he suffers some to be more untender in their Life, and therefore make them walk without sensible Comfort to keep down their Vanity and Pride, so he may exercise some at Death.

Fourthly, Let such so much the more trust God with their Through-bearing, and resolve to be the more in his Debt, and they never took shipping thus at Death's Boat that had Cause to fear to be drown'd and cast away: He is the Believers God and Guide, not only to Death, but even through Death: He may go therefore thro the Valley of the Shadow of Death and fear none evil, *Psal.* 23. We come now to add some further Uses of the main Doctrine to these we made before.

And the first *Use* is, Seeing they are happy that die in the LORD, and miserable that die out of him, whatever their external Condition be;

First, Lay the less Weight on the Comforts of this Life. And,

Secondly, Be the less fear'd for the Afflictions of it. O Believers in CHRIST, there are you see, two Parts of this Use.

First, (to begin with the last) If Happiness be the Portion of them that die in the LORD, what needs Believers who have Clearness of Interest and well-ground Hope to die in the LORD fear Afflictions, or be much troubled with the Ups and Downs of a present Life? Though they meet with Contempt, Reproach, Poverty, Disgrace,

Grace, Imprisonment, Fining, Confining, Exile, many Challenges, &c. These have an End, Death will put a Period and Close to them all; their Happiness is not here, it is at the Back of Death: All your Miseries will soon be at an End, & 'tis a far more exceeding & eternal Weight of Glory that is laid up for you; your Time here away will not be long, it will be but thirty or forty Years to some, ten or twenty Years to other some, some more or fewer, and it may be but one Year to some of you, and then our blessed LORD JESUS will come and wipe away all Tears from your Eyes; and the comfortless Remembrance of these Trials, Troubles and tossings shall never enter into Heaven with you; 'tis a shame that Believers who have such a Hope, should be so heartless when they meet with Crosses, and walk so discouragedly under them.

Secondly, Seeing Happiness follows after Death, lay not much Weight on the Comforts of this life, what Comfort or Satisfaction can you have with them at Death? And seeing they can yield you no solid satisfaction, then are you not far wide and much mistaken, that bestow your Travel & Pains in seeking Satisfaction among Creature Comforts, and never labour to enter into his Rest: Needs there any more to be said to fright you from this foolish Course but this, even to tell you that you leave and forsake the Fountain of living Waters, & betake yourselves to the Cisterns that can hold no Water, and which will dreadfully beguile and disappoint you; what will Riches, Pleasures, Grandeurs, Honours and great Places do you

at

at Death? These make but a poor Happiness, and will soon have an End, and yet there is no Lesson in the World that Men and Women learn less than this.

As all Creatures say, that Wisdom is not in them, *Job. 23.* so they all cry with one Voice, That Happiness is not in them: 'Tis not in Riches, for they take Wings and fly away. 'Tis not in Honour, for Man that is in Honour and understandeth not, is like the Beast that perisheth: Neither is it in Pleasures, for the Laughter of the Fool is Madness, and hath Grief and Sadness of Heart with it, and even in the Midst of it.

A *Second Use* is, and it hath other two Branches, if Happiness follow them that die in the LORD.

First, It calls for a Willingness as well as a Readiness to die, whenever God calls you Believers to it.

Secondly, It serves to condemn a general Unwillingness to die, and possibly somewhat of it even among the people of God.

First, I say, if Happiness be in dying in CHRIST, then they that are in the Way to it, should be ready, willing and chearful to die. And,

Secondly, It must be an exceeding great Distemper, when Folks dow not hear of Death with Patience, and argues strongly that Folks are out of the Way, or not through and clear, as to their being in the Way; therefore reflect upon your Condition: What if God should call any
of

of you this Night, are you willing to die? I believe there is not one amongst many that could heartily say it, there is scarce one amongst many, but when Death comes would fain shift it. I speak not this to condemn the Use of lawful Means in Sicknes for recovering Health, but to check our great Loathness and Unwillingness to die, which is such that we would always suspend and put it off, which speaks either.

First, Little Faith of this Truth, *that they are happy who die in the LORD*, otherwise it could not be but if it were solidly believed, Folks would be more willing to die, and to be with CHRIST, yea, there would be a Desire to be there. If it were testified to Men, by Persons worthy of Credit, *That there was a good, pleasant, fertile Land to be inhabited in such a Place of the World, many would repair thither for making a good Fortune*, (as we use to call it) *in this Life*: And yet for all God's Testimony (who cannot possibly lie nor deceive) of the Happiness that follows dying in CHRIST, yet it is not believed, and therefore few are willing or desirous to go through Death to enjoy it, very few are like *Paul*, who desired to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST, which is best of all; Weakness of Faith makes want of Willingness to die. Or,

Secondly, It speaks out great Want of Love to JESUS CHRIST. Unwillingness to die is no little Sin, but want of Love is greater, when Folks prefer the being with Husbands, or Wife, or Children

Children, or Friends, to being with CHRIST: O! Love to CHRIST strangely looseth the Heart from these, and makes the Soul breathe after being with him, as that which is best of all: Or,

Thirdly, It speaks much earthly-Mindedness, and Addictedness to the Things of a present World; hence it is, that many carnal and earthly-minded Wretches would never desire a better Life, nor another Life than their House and Bit of Land in Quietness, the Fellowship of their natural Relations, and other external Enjoyments.

For clearing of this Use further, let us in a Word touch one Question or two.

First, If a Willingness or Desire to die be good?

Secondly, If a Christian may not sometimes be warrantably unwilling to die.

For the *first* of these, to wit, If a Willingness, or Desire to die be good? To clear it, we would distinguish and put a Difference betwixt these two, a sinful and commendable Willingness.

First, There is a sinful Willingness or Desire to die in Folks carnal Fits, and 'tis Threefold.

1st, A desperate Willingness, when Folks do not abide some present Horror on their Spirits, or some Pain of their Bodies, or some other very heavy and sharp Cross, they will wish to be away, and some in such Fits dispatch themselves by their own Hands, so *Judas* dought not endure

duce the Horror of of his own Conscience, and therefore hanged himself. But this is rather an Unwillingness to submit to, and bear their present Lot and Case, than any Willingness to die.

The other two are incident to the Godly, if not only to them.

The Willingness then is, When the Godly have many Crosses that they dow not well bear, and are afraid that GOD be dishonoured through their fainting, or other Miscarriages, or when they see it go ill with GOD's People and his publick Work, and they cannot do any thing to mend it : They look upon themselves as useless, and would fain be away. So *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 19. prays, LORD, *take away my Life* : Because they had slain his Prophets, digged down his Altars, and he only was left as he apprehended, and they sought to take away his Life ; but the LORD tells him, that he was wrong, that he had yet more to do with him, and that Matters were not so ill as he trowed, for he had reserved seven Thousand that had not bowed the Knee to *Baal*. Thus some eminent Godly Men in an evil Time will readily wish to be away, they dow not endure to be always fighting, striving and contending to help and heal, especially since they think they can do no good : And yet sometimes it is not so much the Case of the Publick, as Fear of being straitned or disappointed in some one or other Particular of their own that is the great Ground of their Fainting and wishing to be gone,

gone, as we may see clearly in eminently godly *Baruch*, Jer. 45.

The *third* Willingness to die is, when a Dispensation or Affliction reflects sore on Folks Credit, whether they be Preachers or more private Professors; either some Slip or Miscarriage in themselves, or some Affront put on them by others, which makes them think they will do no more good (though it may be such a Thing hath come sinfully from others) or, it may be, for Want of Success in some Work committed to them, or some Disappointment met with, which they may have desire to be removed, as we may see in *Jonah* Chap. 3. Where he desires the LORD to take away his Life, he conceiving himself as a Prophet to be discredited, and he is so head-strong, that when the LORD asks him, *Does thou well to be angry Jonah?* He answers him pettishly, *I do well to be angry, even unto Death:* Where God hints it to be his Passion that precipitated him, and by the Gourd lets him see that it was this Particular that too much swayed him, and that he was not right in his Desire of Death, or in his Willingness to die.

For the *Second*, The commendable Willingness, I shall shew you what it is by four or five Properties that it hath.

First, Right Willingness to die, is content to die in Prosperity, and is submissive to live in Adversity: When all Things prosper with Men, 'tis a very rare Thing to see them willing to die, though in Fits of Cross Dispensations,

ons, they may seem to be willing, and to have a submissive Mind contented to live in Adversity, yea, in the Midst of greatest Troubles that are incumbent or imminent is as rare. To be as *Paul* was, *Philip*. 1. 23. content to abide or go as *God* thinks meet, is a sweet Temper or Frame of Soul; to be willing to live ashamed and reproached, and not to be discontented with the Down-lookings of honest Folks, and to go through evil Report as well as good Report, in all Things labouring to keep a good Conscience, and in Prosperity, as I said, content to leave the World, and all that is in it, when *God* calls by Death, is a great Matter.

Secondly, Right Willingness hath this Property, that it flows not so much from a Desire to be quit of the Troubles of the World, as to enjoy *CHRIST*, and the Good which the Soul hopes for in and with him: 'Tis not because either the Person's own particular Crosses grow, or because Confusions, Distractions and Contentions in the publick Increase, that they covet to be out of that Life, and to be gone, but because they long to be with *Jesus CHRIST*; *We*, (saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 4) *that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burdened*; and what is the Ground? *not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon*; not so much to get the Infirmities of the Body laid down, as to have the Glory promised; it is that which sways mainly in the right Desire of Death, or Willingness to die,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Right Willingness to die hath much Desire and Endeavour after Communion with Christ here, and if it cannot come soon enough (so to speak) to full, immediate, and never to be interrupted Communion with him in the next Life, it seeks to make it up by pressing much after the nearest Communion with him in this Life; it is an evil Token, when Folk are desirous to die and be away, and yet are found neglecting Communion with Christ while they are living. These that are rightly willing to die, will be much in Desire and longing after Fellowship with Christ, and much in the delightful Contemplation of Heaven ere it come, and in their Practice tending thitherward, and very loath to do any Thing that may obstruct that so much desired Fellowship: This we may see in *David* in the Old Testament, and in *Paul* in the New. O how do they pray and pant after; and O what Pains are they at to keep Communion with God! And how do they labour along all their Conversation so to behave that no Obstruction from them may be laid in the Way of their so much longed-for Fellowship with him.

Let none then think, that it can be a right Willingness to die, that puts not Men to be tender in the Study of Holiness, and of Conformity to Christ in their Life: Therefore it is said of *Simeon*, whow as willing to die, that he was a just and devout Man, waiting for the Consolation of *Israel*; and by him, and other

such godly Persons in his Time, was the Temple frequented Night and Day.

Fourthly, That is right Willingness to die, that is not by Fits, but continuing and distinct, and goes upon solid Grounds, I speak not of sensible Comfort, but of the Grounds of Faith, of some Clearness of Interest, and of sweet Submission to GOD's blessed Will. For though none needs to wonder much of *Simeon's* Willingness to die, when he had gotten CHRIST in his Arms, yet it hath this sweet Submission to GOD in it.

The *Second Question*, *If even Believers may be willing to die; and if this be warrantable?*

I answer, They may be sometimes unwilling to die, and that not unwarrantably, and for clearing of this we shall speak to two Things.

First, To an Unwillingness to die upon carnal Grounds.

For the First, Believers may be unwilling to die from a sinful Unpreparedness to die, they may have a Loathness to look Death in the Face, through the Conscience of some, yea, much Carnalness in their Life; beside that there is in all naturally an Averseness from dying. Believers may have sometimes their own carnal Designs, that may make them unwilling, but this is sinful: For where there is a good Conscience sprinkled with CHRIST's Blood, solid Faith and Clearness about our Peace with GOD, in so far they will make Willingness to die. But,

Secondly, There is an approved Unwillingness that

that sometimes has been in the Saints, as in *David* and *Hezekiah*, which is rather a sweet Submission to live, than a direct Desire to live for other Reasons, for if it be a fear about the Want of temporal or spiritual Things for Soul or Body, or about any Thing that relates to God's publick Work, Faith will answer these; but there are two Reasons that the Saints have gone on, by which they have been induced to this, that made them approven in their Unwillingness to die.

First, The great Stroke and Influence that their Removal might have had on the Work of God, as it was in *Hezekiah*, *Josiah* and *Paul* their Case; if the former two should have been removed, it would very probably have overturned the Work of God, as *Paul's* Removal would have made many sore Hearts among Christians.

Secondly, When their dying in such a Case, or under such a Dispensation, seems to carry some Blot with it, on innocent godly Persons, or on Godliness and the Profession of it: As if *Job* should have died in his Affliction it would have confirmed his Friends in their erroneous Opinion or Tenet; and *David's* dying in the Hands of his Enemies before he came to the Crown, would have left some Blemish on the Faithfulness of God, and on the Profession of Religion, and been Matter of Shame and Blushing to the Godly: Therefore says he, *For their Sakes return thou on High: And*

so that Unwillingness to die, that flows not from Respect to a Man's self, but from Respect to the publick Work of God, to his Glory, or others Good, or either of them, is warrantable.

A *Third* Use is, which hath also two Branches :

First, Learn from this Doctrine, to try and judge what true Blessedness is, it is even to die in the LORD.

Secondly. Learn to cast at that as an unhappy Thing, which conduceth not to this End of dying in the LORD.

First, I say, If you would try your own Hearts, when they are in a spiritual Frame, take this as a Mark of it; if we do really account this to be Blessedness; if ye were to hear a Voice from Heaven declaring who is the blessed Man, and if ye had the Spirit's Testimony sealing it, here he is, *Blessed is he that dies in the Lord*: 'Tis not they that conquer, and overturn and transfer Kingdoms, that obtain Victories, and have great Success in their Achievements and Undertakings, that are blessed: 'Tis not to be a Protector or sole Governor of Nations that makes a Man blessed; but this is it, *to die in the Lord*? This is the Language of Heaven, and that which is laid Weight on there, and so should be by you. And,

Secondly, Lay all the Things you can imagine in this World in the Balance with this, they cannot possibly weigh equally with it, when they
are

are laid in Balance with dying in the LORD, and with the consequent Glory and Happiness, they are light as a Feather, yea, lighter than Vanity, utterly unworthy ever to be named in a Day with these: As there is therefore no Happiness in them, so cease to seek it in or from them.

A *Fourth* Use is, and 'tis of other two Branches, If there be a Necessity of dying, and dying in the LORD, to them that would be happy, then there is nothing so forcible to press the Study of Holiness.

Secondly, Nothing so forcible to scar from Prophanity, which is the great Scope of all Preaching: I say, Consider this Doctrine rightly, and it will be found.

First: To be more powerfully provoking to Holiness; the Reason is, Because dying well and living well are knit together; and nothing can more demonstrate the absolute Necessity of Holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD: 'Tis as necessary as Peace with God and Heaven, and whoever they be that think not so now, whenever they shall be summoned to remove, they shall without all peradventure find it to be so.

Secondly, Is there any Thing more scarring at and deterring from Prophanity and a carnal Walk? Gather all that the World can afford, whether of sinful Pleasures or of lawful temporal Delights, immoderately often used, and suppose that you could come by your very Heart's Desire and With in them, what will

they all advantage you when Death comes? To have so many Thousands, or Hundred Thousands of Merks, to have so much land, or so many Houses, will do you no good at Death. What will it advantage you to spend your Time in Pleasue, in the Lusts of the Flesh, in Tippling and Drunkenness? And ye that are swelled with Pride and Ambition, and would have all others backing you, and beckning and bowing to you; What, I say, will these profit you, when Death shall come and put an End to them all, and make an eternal Divorce betwixt you and them, and when you must ly down among the Dead, and the Worms must be a Covering to you? 'Tis even a Wonder (if ought of this kind could be a Wonder to our carnal and profane Hearts) considering the Necessity of dying, and of dying in the LORD, to all that would die well and happily, with the Faith and Conviction that we generally profess to have of them, that we think so little seriously of Death, and of such a Death, and are at so little Pains in the Study of Holiness to prepare for it.

I shall therefore in the next Place speak a Word or two to several Sorts of Persons, who should be thinking upon and preparing for Death.

First, To them that are young, and take a merry Life of it, and drow abide nothing but to be carnally jovial, Ah! poor Wantons, is not Death fast approaching? Will it not be upon you ere you are aware, and ere many Years

go by : Certainly your Life will not be eternal, and who knows but your Time may be shorter than you dream of? The Grave may be as soon filled with you that are younger, healthfuller and stronger as with the more aged, sick and infirm ; what reason then have you to be so merry and jovial, when your Peace is not made sure with God? 'Tis a most remarkable and alarming Word that is spoken to you by the SPIRIT OF GOD, *Eccles 11. 9. Rejoice, O young Man in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, in the Sight of thine Eyes ; but know for all these Things, GOD will bring thee into Judgment.* You may go on if you will at your Peril, slighting all Warnings and Admonitions ; but be assured Death and Judgment are quickly coming, when you will be called to reckon with God, not only for every open, but for every secret Thing, good or evil : Therefore be exhorted to reveiw and cast your Eye along your Youth, and to consider seriously how it hath been spent, and see if there be not reason for your taking the Exhortation that followe, *Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, &c. Eccl. 12. 1.* And to spend some more Time in thinking of, and preparing for Death.

Secondly, To them that are exceeding wise in their own Generation, very provident for Summer and Winter, and for all the Seasons of the Year, and who

can manage their Estates very well, and put all Things in good Order for themselves and for their Children, to make them a convenient Life in the World, but do not at all in good Earnest mind another Life, how many such are there, that are very wise for this Life, but for the Matters of God and their own Souls are stark Fools, the veriest Fools in the World? Many are like *Martha* (who, though a good Woman, was nevertheless much prevail'd over by this Distemper, albeit it did not reign in her nor obtain Dominion over her, as it doth over unregenerate Persons) are careful, cumbered, and troubled about many Things, and neglect the one Thing that is needful: Is it not a Wonder that such very rational and wise Men should waste all their precious Time, except what they spend in eating, drinking and sleeping, upon the Things of a present Life, and not allow so much as an Hour of all the Week to think seriously on their Souls, and of Death? I appeal to your own Consciences if this be reasonable, and a Practice worthy of rational Men, having immortal Souls capable of eternal Happiness and Misery? And if your Time be not spent on these Things, which are but Vanity, and which at Death will do you no good, nor profit you, and concerning which you will then be made to cry, *What Profit have we of these Things whereof we are now ashamed.*

Thirdly, To such as are frequent in their Attendance on publick Ordinances, and in the Use of

of other commanded Means, and yet never thought nor believed their Souls to be in Hazard, nor in good Earnest prepared themselves for dying. O think yet upon your Hazard, for that is the first Spring of making ready for the Remedy: O seek Grace to examine yourselves, to believe in CHRIST, to repent, and to live as it becomes them that profess themselves to be dying Persons. 'Tis really both strange and wonderful, how it comes to pass, that you can so often hear, and yet give no Obedience to what you hear. Do you, or can you think that it is Religion enough to hear? Hath not the Scripture said, *James 1. that it is not the Hearer, but the Doer of the Word, that is blessed in his Deed, or doing?* I beseech you therefore, *be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own Souls;* or, as the Word is, deluding and playing the Sophist with your own Souls.

Fourthly, To them that have greater Parts and Abilities, and higher Places and Powers than others, and have withal moe Opportunities to be preparing for Death; who are Masters of Families, and can command their Children and Servants to read the Scripture, to fast and pray, and seek God, and who know from the Word, what is right and what is wrong, what is Duty and what is Sin, and yet are so very little in the Practice of these Directions, in order to their Preparation for Death. Consider, I intreat you, what your Knowledge, Parts, Places and Powers

ers will do to you, or advantage you when you are dying, if there be not Faith and Love and the Fruits of Both in Practice. 'Tis really a Wonder that so many Men should have Light in, and Conviction of these Things, and yet should so dally with their Light and Conviction, and not endeavour to make them practicable.

Fifthly, To them that are aged, and have their one Foot as it were in the Grave, who are near Fifty or Sixty, or a very few more Years which not many exceed, and yet are, even when so far on in Years, as secure and negligent in preparing for Death, as if it were an hundred Years from them; Consider what you are doing. Age, alas! and Years do not necessarily bring along with them more Tender-ness in Soul Concerns, for we see in Experience often-times, that the more aged Men are, the more stocked are they in Ignorance and Sense-lessness; Certainly if this Word speak to any, it speaks to you, that should in a Manner, carry your Death's Clothes about with you, and be exemplary to others in preparing for Death; ye would therefore take it to you.

A *Sixth* and the last Sort we shall speak to, are those that are in a poor, mean and low Condition in the World, for all are not rich and wealthy, nor have a plentiful outward Condition, many can scarcely get their Families maintain'd and yet even but few of such (which is a Wonder) are seriously seeking after Heaven, and preparing

paring for dying in the LORD that leads to it: The rich have a Temptation that ye want; if any in the World should seek after Heaven it should be you who are poor, and yet how many of you will be miserable, not only here, but also eternally hereafter, ere ye betake yourselves to the Way of Holiness? If you were wise as you ought to be, you would bless God that ever this Gospel came among you, and was preached to the poor, which hath Happiness and everlasting Riches in the Bosom of it to all that will embrace it.

O! take this Word to you Poor and Rich, ye will all most certainly ly down in the Grave, but this will make the Difference, ye will die happy or accursed, as ye die in CHRIST, or out of him.

Finally, I must say this Word to them, that have some Acquaintance with GOD, and some Conviction of the Fecklesness and great Deficiency of their Endeavours in preparing for Death, for their both humbling and upstirring to Diligence, that there is amongst us, both little rousing of ourselves, little hastning to the coming of the Day of GOD, little going out to meet the Bridegroom. Alas! we will, to speak so, take both a Put and a Call to make us advance towards Death, though we be drawing near to it daily, yet few of us, as I just now said, are waiting for, and hastning unto the Coming of CHRIST, and of the Day of GOD.

I shall

I shall close up all this with one Word, it may be many of us shall taste of Death, before we hear so much spoken of it: Take it therefore as an Advertisement and Call from Heaven, to mind more that which is much forgotten, and yet so necessary to be always remembred, even to live so as we may die in the LORD CHRIST, and so be eternally and unspeakably blessed.



S E R M O N VI.

REVELATION CHAP. XIV. VER. 13.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, etc.

ALthough we have already spoken at greater Length on these Words, than at first we intended, yet somewhat remains that is useful and which seems to be their main Scope; therefore we shall insist a little further.

The Way that we gather what we are to say, is by considering the Spirit's Purpose and Design in this Place, which comes in very remarkably, having no particular Dependance (as would seem) on the former Words, nor Connexion with what follows; what can be the Reason that betwixt the Denonnciation of Judgment before, and the Prophecies of Judgment that follow, there

there is such an Interruption and breaking off from the Series of the History made? *I heard a Voice saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, &c.* There must sure be some Reason: We shall offer these two Reasons that point especially at the Scope of the Spirit of God, and are insinuated in the Words, that they will be Grounds of two Doctrines.

The *First* Reason is, That the LORD when he is speaking of sad Things to come upon his Church, and of Judgments to come upon the Enemies thereof, casts in this as a Ground of profitable Meditation to his People at such a Time; so that whether we look to Judgments to come on Enemies, or to Trials and Temptations his own People are to meet with, this is cast in seasonably as a practical Lesson, plain in itself, and profitable to them.

A *Second* Reason is, That God by such a Word, when Death is so frequent, and Trouble and Confusion should grow, may comfort and encourage his People, that Death may not be bitter nor terrible to them, since the LORD puts this Motto, to say so, on Mens dying in him in the darkest and saddest Times, That *they are blessed.*

These Two being the Scope, the one to prepare them for dying, and the other to comfort them against dying, they yield to us these two useful Points of Doctrine, the first whereof we shall speak to at this Time, which is this,

Doctrine

Doctrin First, *That Death and the Happiness of them that die in the LORD, is a suitable and profitable Subject of the Meditation of GOD's People, especially in Times of Trouble.*

This we conceive is clearly implied in the Words: certainly the Spirit that is so wise, and who opportunely timeth, and tryeth Things for the good of his People, would not so abruptly have broken in on this Purpose at this Time, if it were not very pertinent and suitable to such a Time; there is not in all this Book such a remarkable Diversion from the Series of the History, having such a Word prefixed and such a Word affixed and subjoined to it as this; no doubt, to stir up GOD's People who have this book to read, when they come to this memorable Passage, to think and consider on it the more seriously. To clear the Doctrine more generally a little, we find that these who have been most holy, have been most frequent in the Thoughts and Meditations of Death, so David prays, *Psal. 39. LORD, make me to know mine End, and the Number of my Days, that I may know how frail I am:* And Moses, *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts to Wisdom, Psal. 90.* The numbring of our Days is this serious thinking and meditating upon approaching Death. We may here also look on the Example of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, *Luke 9. 13.* Who speaks at his Transfiguration on the Mount with Moses and Elias of his Decease,

cease, which he was to accomplish at *Jerusalem*; for though there was something peculiar in his Death, yet his speaking of it and preparing for it, belongeth as a common Duty to us, and should be a Pattern to us. And O! how does *Solomon* commend the meditating on Death, *Eccles.* 7. 2. and 11. 8, 9. and Chapter 12. throughout.

But for further and more particular clearing of this Doctrine, we shall speak a little to these three contained in it.

First, What is meant when we say Death is a suitable Subject of Meditation.

Secondly, What Profit or Advantage comes to the People of God by it?

3dly, Why do we say it is especially profitable & advantageous to be thought upon in an evil Time?

For the *First*, When we speak of Death as a suitable Subject of Meditation, it is not to be strictly as taken contra-distinguishing from other Things that preceed, accompany and follow Death. But,

First, We take in the Thoughts of the Certainty of dying, and the Uncertainty of its Time, & other Circumstances as to us: 'Tis then to think on Death as the Way of all flesh, as that which no Man can get a Discharge from, and of the Uncertainty of the Time and Manner of it, how suddenly and surprising it may be.

Secondly, When we speak of the Meditation of Death, we take in all that accompany it, the Pain and outward Trouble, as also the Challenges,

ges, Convictions, Temptations, Terrors and Anxieties that accompany Death, and the Estimation of Things, that we see dying Men to have; all these would be taken in as a Part of this Meditation.

Thirdly, When we speak of meditating on Death, we mean not that it would be meditated on, only as it is a natural Thing, after the Fall of Man, but would consider and distinguish it in its several Kinds, as 'tis dying in Sin, and dying in the LORD, the first and second Death; we would look upon Death, on the one Side, as an Effect of the Curse, and on the other Side, as sweetned with GOD's Love, and as an Entry into Happiness; And we would add to this, the Causes of the one and of the other, what it is that makes Death miserable to one, and happy or the Entry of Happiness to another.

Fourthly, When we speak of thinking on Death, we would take in the Effects and Consequents of Death, our appearing before God, Judgment and Eternity, that are at the Back of Death: The entering into an Unchangeable Estate of well or ill being, meeting with a Sentence that is irrevocable, and eternal Happiness of them that die in CHRIST, the eternal Misery of them that die in Sin, Perfection of Joy and Extremity of Sorrow for ever, which Men and Angels are not able to conceive, and far less to express: And when we speak of Meditation on Death, we say, 'tis a suitable Subject to be thinking

thinking often and frequently on all thir, not only at more solemn and set Times, but even in the Midst of our Calling and Employments, in the Midst of our Joy, and of our Grief and Sadness, to be taking some serious Looks of this Day, that will put an End to all these in the Way before spoken of; in your Youth to be considering this Day of Darknes is coming, and in old Age especially, when the Shadow of Death sits down on the Eye-lids, and the strong Men begin to bow themselves, &c.

As to the *Second*, to commend this Duty to you all, consider what Advantage flows from it: though we spoke of Meditation in general at another Occasion, and hinted somewhat at the Meditation on Death, yet it being so frequently spoken of in Scripture, and so profitable to Believers, we shall speak a little to some Advantages that will commend the Expedience of the Duty, as well as the Necessity of it to you. And,

First, Much of the Improvement of the great Truths we have been speaking of to you these Days past, depends on your Meditation on Death, and these Things that go before, accompany and follow after it: 'Tis impossible to know aright, and to believe how great a Task and Work it is, to die well, and what is the Happiness of them that die so, if we be not taking Pains to be cleared and confirmed in it by Scripture, and by meditating on it: Folks take but a Glance at it in the by, but stay not to look

on

on the Quarrel, and the Controversy that is betwixt God and them, neither do they consider seriously, what is at the Back of Death, and therefore it surpriseth them when it comes; whereas that Man can speak of Death boldly and advisedly, that hath been acquainting himself with it before-hand.

Secondly, There is nothing that readily doth more heighten the Estimation of God, and of CHRIST than the Thoughts of Death, the Thoughts of it brings Folks closer and nearer to his Bar, and makes them look on him as Judge, they put them to consider their Feckleness, Baseness and Vileness upon the one Hand, and the greatness of the Majesty of God on the other. O how sublimely do *David* and *Job* speak of God; When in the one Word they talk of the Grave, and of the Cover of Worms there, and in the other Word, highly exalt the Majesty and Greatness of God. Meditation on Death brings the Thoughts what God is, and of what we are, very near us, and represents to us before-hand, what he will be found to be at and after Death, and what he will be then; whereas on the contrary, it is given as a Root of our despising God, when men do put the evil Day far away, as no doubt a Root of Reverence and Respect to God, is serious Meditation on Death.

Thirdly, More particularly look to Believers conversing with others that have Grace, or that abound in Corruption, we will find it exceeding
need.

needful, useful and advantageous to carry along the Thoughts of Death; 'twould make Christians walk lovingly and edifyingly with others, lother to do wrong, and more patient when they suffered Wrong, and more easy to forgive and more ready to forget Wrongs; our carnal Humours would not get such Way, if the Thoughts of dying were suitably entertained, and half an Hour's Discourse, together with the Impression of it on us, through God's Blessing, would edify and profit us mutually more than many Days Meeting without it could do.

Fourthly, In reference to a Man's self.

First, More generally Meditation on Death is a most quieting, and Spirit-sobering Thing; it stays the Mind, it diverts from Vanities, and removes them from being the Object of his Pursuit; nay, it some Way crucifies him to them: And hence it is, that men are seldom or never in a more sober, and in a better Frame than when they are seriously apprehensive of Death; as, suppose Men to be in Sicknes, or in Danger at Sea, or on Land, they will be readily in another Frame than ordinarily they use to be in, and when the Danger or Strait is by, that Impression wears readily much away; but were we more in Meditation of Death, this Frame might be more constant and lasting.

Secondly, More particularly.

First, It contributes, through God's Blessing, to rectify a Man's Judgment, that by original Sin is darkned, and so accounteth Ill Good,
and

and Good Ill, the Thoughts of Death make a Man wise, discreet and condescending: Men while they are in Health and without these Thoughts, will not quit an Inch of their Will, they will rather wound their Conscience than their Credit; and to get their Barns full, and all going well with them in the World, wholly takes them up; but the serious Thoughts of Death, makes them wise to discern and judge of Things; therefore *Moses* joins these two together, thinking on Death, and the applying of the Heart to Wisdom, *Psalms* 90. When Folks think not on Death, they are cumbered with many things, they run to Cisterns, and turn their Back on the Fountain: Whereas serious pondering on Death, lets the Vanity and Emptiness of these Things be seen. How many see we daily, when dying, counting little of these Things they thought much of before, and calling and accounting themselves Fools that suffered themselves to be so carried away with them; and however God's Spirit calls them Fools that make such Choice.

Secondly, As it enlighthneth the Judgment, so it ordereth the Affections, and rules the Passions; therefore when *Solomon* is speaking to the young Man who will be tied with no Bonds, he ironically bids them rejoice and laugh on, but withal wills him to remember, that *for all these Things he will come to Judgment*: The Meditation of Death and Judgment will say of Laughter, Thou art mad, and of Mirth, What dost thou? It would

would make Men look on them as Vanity, Folly and Madneſs and theſe Thoughts would eſpecially become Folks in Proſperity, and in their Youth, when their Humours are more high bend- ed and light : Meditation on Death is a notable Bridle to Lightneſs.

Thirdly, If we will yet look more particular- ly forward, it is exceeding profitable to advance Mortification, to bring us out of the Entangle- ments of a World, and to help us in Singleneſs and Deniedneſs to follow Chriſt; *Thou Fool*, ſays Death, *this Night thy Soul ſhall be taken from thee, and whoſe ſhall all theſe Things be?* It makes Mens Carouſing and good Fellowſhip, as they call it, taſteleſs : Conſcience would in that Caſe ſpeak and ſay, What if thou die drunken, or with the Cup in thy Hand? This Medi- tation makes a Man care little for the World, Riches, Pleaſures, and Honours : It would make all to grow very unſavoury ; in a Word, it mor- tiſies theſe three, which are the World's Trini- ty, Pride, Covetouſneſs and carnal Luſts.

First, It mortifies Pride, as we may ſee in David, who ſays, *Pſalm 39. Lord, teach me to know my End, and the Measure of my Days, that I may know how frail I am.* And in Job, who ſays, *to Corruption, it is his Mother, and to the Worms, they are his Siſters :* It puts to ſay, *Duſt I am, and to the Duſt I ſhall return.*

Secondly, It mortifies Covetouſneſs, for the Meditations of Death wrings the Heart from the Things

Things of the world, and gives the Man other Thoughts to think upon: How many, when Death approaches, are forced to say, they have cumbred themselves with the World, and it has beguiled them.

Thirdly, It mortifies carnal Pleasures; for what can vain fleshly Lusts do to men that are dying? For as merry as they are now, say these Thoughts, they must appear within a little before God in Judgment: And if this be not a Bridle to these Lusts, I know not what will be a Bridle.

Fourthly, It stirs up to diligent Exercise of all Duties, and to the going about of them soberly, and seriously. Preaching or Prayer after serious Meditation on Death, would have more Weight, and be waited on with more Advantage, than many others without it: It puts to Humiliation, Self-examination, Self-searching: It furthers the Exercise of GOD, and brings the Soul to stand in awe of him, before whom it is to appear shortly: It furthers Repentance and Prayer, Job 41. *Because of Breakings they purify themselves*: Even these Heathens in the Ship with *Jonah*, make themselves ready for Death by Repentance, Prayer, and the offering of Sacrifices. And if Meditation on Death put profane Men to the Form of Religion, how much more will it put Believers to be serious and spiritual in the Exercise of these Duties, and in the Practice of Religion? And if God gives them Time, and Seriousness at dying, their
Fleck-

seckful and fervent at that Time than before.

Fifthly, It is exceeding profitable to work kindly Submission to cross Dispensations, and to make folks go softly under them. What will a Man care, (carkingly I mean) that is taken up with Meditation on Death, for the Forfeiture of his Estate, or to have his House burnt, or his Land wasted? He knows that Death will put an End to all these Things.

Sixthly, As it fits for all Duties, and restrains from all Vices, so it exceedingly prepares for Death itself, which is the great Scope; *Solomon* describes Sickness and old Age, *Eccles.* 12. to make the young Man ready for Death ere it come; and if there were no other Advantage by Meditation on Death, this is no small one, not to be surprised with it. Yea, it some way also mitigates the Bitterness of Death, so that it is not so terrible to them that have been thinking on it seriously, as it is to others who have never made it the Subject of their Meditation? And what Wonder is it to see many either mightily terrified, or very stupid at Death since they never studied the Lesson of dying before it come to them?

But as to the *Third*, Why add we this, *That it is especially advantageous in evil Times*? Which seems to be the very Scope of the Words, and the Godly, such as *David* and others, have thought it so. We do not say, that Meditation on Death, is especially profitable and advantageous in ill Times, as if it were

H

not

not to be thought on in Times of Prosperity and Peace, but that it is exceeding necessary and singularly profitable in an evil Time, and in such an one as we now live in; and the great Necessity and Advantage of this ariseth from three Things, which accompany an evil Time.

First, Many Snares and Temptations; in an ill Time Flesh and Blood is ready to postpone a good Conscience, and to prefer Self-preservation: Now, living in the Meditation of Death guards against that; if the Temptation say, Man spare, or save thyself, the Soul that was thinking on Death will say, I may soon lose my good Conscience by yielding to such a Thing for Preservation of myself, and yet it may be myself shall not live an Year after it, and though I should live Twenty, yet shall I be brought to count for it: And therefore I will rather hazard on the Loss of any Thing, yea, of Life itself, than be wounding or ship-wrecking my Conscience and provoking God. Hence the Apostle tells us, 2 Cor. 5. that he was not swayed with outward Things.

Secondly, Another Evil accompanies an evil Time, and it is carnal Sorrow, Fainting, Perplexity, Discouragement; Meditation on Death mitigates these: It says, that these Things, or any other Thing the Godly can suffer, are not eternal; it sweetneth our Grief, it diverts the Mind from carnal Thoughts to that which is more profitable; it easeth the Mind, and layeth the Storms, and calmeth the Confusion that

out-

outward Difficulties and Troubles raise and awaken in it, and gives a profitable Use of sad Things.

Thirdly, There is in an evil Time ordinarily much Confusion and Distraction, that is down which we think should be up, and that is up which we think should be down, and our Minds are ready to stagger and reel to and fro like a drunken Man because of these Confusions; but the Thoughts of Death stay the Mind, and says that Death ere long will bring all these Things to an End, or else an End to us, and will bring them all to be recognised and judged over again; to this Purpose compare Verse 16, and 17. of Eccles. where Solomon says, *I saw the Place of Judgment, that Wickedness was there, and the Place of Righteousness, that Iniquity was there.* And what does comfort him against this? *I said in mine Heart God will judge the Righteous and the Wicked, for there is a Time there for every Purpose, and for every Work.* Oftentimes there is not a Season for every Thing here, but at Death there is a Season for every Thing: All Sentences that have been wrongously past here, will be reduced there; the Consideration of this stays his Heart and comforts him.

The Uses are two; The first is by way of Exhortation, to commend this excellent, tho' much slighted Duty, not only Meditation in the general, but Meditation in particular on this Subject of Death; Folks have often as little Mind of this Duty, as if it were not in the Word of God, and yet it is frequently called for there; and if any Generation,

then in this, wherein there is so much Confusion, turning of Things upside down, and reeling to and fro; so many Snares and so many Grounds of Grief and Sorrow; when so many are carnally weighted and dejected, and so many are declining and going wrong: And, as we shewed before, we think that this Text relates to this time of the World, the Time of God's beginning to execute his Judgments on Antichrist before the full Harvest and Vintage come; and therefore we would speak to this Use a little more particularly, because 'tis very useful, and a notable Mean to make you go profitably about the Practice of all that we have spoken to on this Purpose: For it puts us in Mind of these Directions for right living in order to dying, and it holds us at them: Without the minding of Death, there can be no minding of them; for these that mind not the End, can never mind the Middles. Because, I say' 'tis thus useful, we shall therefore for further clearing of it speak a little to two Things.

1. To some Directions or Rules, shewing how we should think on Death.

2. To some Helps and Means thereto.

For the *First*, ye remember, when we said Death was a suitable Subject of Meditation, we took in Death in its Circumstances, Concomitants and Kinds; and our Direction or Rule shall be this.

Be particular in your Meditation, let it not
be

be abstracted from yourself in particular. 'Tis not enough to take it for granted, that Death is common to all: So does *Job*, Chap. 30. 23. *I know that thou shalt bring me to Death.* And so does *David*, Psalm. 39. *Lord teach me to know mine End, and the Number of my Days, how frail I am.* Go through all the Concomitants of Death, and consider what may be your Case at Death, what will be your Challenges, Temptations and Thoughts, and what will be the Effects and Consequents of Death to you, when you must with these Eyes, and none other for you, behold and face your Judge.

Secondly, Cast a reflex Look on yourselves, and your own Way in Meditation: When you look to that Way that prepares one to die well, look back and see if such a Preparation be in you; consider how your Way suits with that which the Scripture holds out to be the Way, if such Challenge may meet you at Death, and what Course is taken with it to answer or prevent it; this was *Job's* Chap. 31. where he tells us That he durst not slight the Cause of his Manservant or Maid-servant when they contended with him, for then he should not have a good Answer to his Judge, and that if he had done otherwise, it would have marred his Boldness.

Thirdly, Labour to have your Affections moved in your meditating on Death: This is a chief End of Meditation, otherwise we will but run to and fro, and rove up and down

to inform the Judgment, and carry the Thoughts of Death as a common Place alongſt with us, but will get no more good of it; the ſpecial Thing is to have ſomewhat dropping from it, that may melt the Heart as it was with David, *Pſalm 77. I thought on God and was troubled; Pſalm 63. My Soul ſhall be filled as with Marrow and Fatneſs*: There is ſomething like this in meditating on Death, it affects the Heart with Terror, when the Soul thinks on dying without Clearneſs of Inter-eſt: It affects the Heart with Comfort and Joy, when the Soul is clear in its Inter-eſt; to think on dying in Chriſt ſo as thereby to be advanced a Step nearer unto it, and to drink in what we have been thinking upon, that is the truly profitable thinking on ſuch a Thing; the Meditation that is without affecting of the Heart, is like the chewing of Meat that is preſently ſpit out again, and not ſwallowed down and digeſted, or to the looking only on what is profitable without making any further Uſe of it: Such, I ſay, is all our ſpeaking, hearing and thinking of Death, when they do not affect the Heart.

Fourthly, Study to be practical in your Meditation, that is, to have it tend to ſome profitable Uſe in your Practice as its End: When you have to ſet about the amending of it; when you have found out ſomething ſpiritually profitable, reſolutely to go about it, and all the Means to attain it.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Seek to be much in Prayer to God, and in Dependance on him for Direction in this Particular; go about Meditation on Death as a Duty commanded by God, with Prayer to him, and with Dependance on him for his Assistance, and his Blessing on it: Many look not on the Meditation of Death in particular as a peculiar Duty, and therefore it is so much slighted. When we commend it to you as a Duty, we mean these three Things;

First, That you should look upon it as being useful and profitable as well as any other Duty.

Secondly, That ye should go about it as in his Presence: Ordinarily Folk take a greater Latitude in Meditation than in Prayer; but ye would remember and consider, that he is Witness to your Meditations as well as your Prayers, that he is the great Subject of it, that he has laid it on by his Command, that suitable Meditation is and must be wrought by his Spirit, and that ye will and must count to him for your Wandrings in it, as well as in your Prayer.

Thirdly, That you should take in all, at least the general Circumstances of it pointed at before; that you should take Time to it, and bathe yourselves to it of set Purpose; and even now and then, when possibly you might have some other Thing to do that is not necessary for the Time: And that ye would by Prayer seek God's guiding in this particular Duty as well as in other Duties, as *Moses* doth, *Pf 90. Teach us to number our Days*: Be not frightened from it by the apprehended Difficulty of it; for as Meditation in the

general is hard and difficult, so is the particular Meditation of Death even a Subject that we are naturally averse from; therefore *David*, prays, *Psalms 39. Lord, teach me to know mine End, &c.* And indeed, more frequent and habitual Exercise and Practice of it, would through God's Blessing make it more easy.

For the 2d. Because there is a difficulty in this Duty, as we have just now hinted, we shall therefore propose or point out a few Things that may help it: There is nothing we have more Motives to, or Memorandums of, (to say so) than of this, take then these Helps.

1. Consider seriously the frequent Deaths and Burials among you every Day whereof ye are Witnesses, and at which you were present, and possibly of several younger, healthier and stronger than yourselves, and of whom it might have been thought not many Days since, they would have out-lived you: And then reflect upon yourselves, and see if you are prepared for Death, when you are in your Houses, or going in the Streets, and hear the Bell giving notice of the Death of such and such Persons, or see the Corpses carried forth to their Burial place, think on these Things for they are helpful:

Therefore *Solomon* says, *Better is the Day of one's Death, than the Day of one's Birth;* and he gives the Reason, *For the living will lay it to Heart;* that is, The living should lay it to Heart.

2. Look unto, and consider well your own Infirmities,

firmities, Sickneses and Diseases of one Kind or another. There are none but they have the Seed of fewer or more Diseases in them, besides Fits of Sickness that befall them now and then, and what is the Language of all these but this. *Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return,*

When Folks have in their Bodies the Beginning of Rottenness, or of a Gangrene, they will spread; you would hear all these Infirmities, Diseases and Distempers crying aloud upon you that you will and must die, for these cry to you every Day, as that Man was cried unto by one whom he had appointed to cry at his Door every Morning, *Thou art Mortal.*

3. Consider the extraordinary Events that befall many Men and Women, some are suddenly stricken down with Palsies, some fall down and never rise, some go abroad and never return, some are stricken with Fury and Madness; and are any of us exempted from these or any of them?

4. We commend to you frequent reading of, and meditating on these Scriptures that speak of Death, and of other Books that treat of that Subject, and set forth most lively the Shortness of Man's Life; be often reading of the Death of the Saints; many are rather taken up with reading vain Romances or Stories that are unprofitable in comparison of this; and others are, it may be, taken up with mysterious, dark, doubtful and little edifying Questions and Debates.

5. We commend to you to think seriously upon the Names that Death gets in Scripture, and the Comparifon whereby it is there holden forth; for there are not many Things that we can readily mention or meet with, which may not ferve to put in mind of dying. Do Men put off their Clothes? Death is compared to that, *2 Cor* 5. Do we ly down in our Beds to take Reft? Death is alfo compared to that, *Ifaiah* 55. 5, 7. Where the Prophet, fpeaking of the Righteous, faith, *He fhall enter into Peace, they fhall reft in their Beds*: So to the fame Purpofe Death is compared to a Sleep, One Generation goes and another comes, and every one fleeps their Sleep, *Pfalms* 76. 5. Would you but reflect when you are going to Bed, and confidet what Pofture you are lying down in, and from this bethink yourfelf what is out of Order, and how you may be fuitably affected with it, and rife up in the Morning with a Refolution to praftife accordingly, it were a profitable Meditation: Death is alfo called the Way of all Flefh, and can we reckon our Age, or Number of our Years, but it muft at leaft put us in mind of Death that is faft coming? Yea, can we fo much as breathe (which is one of the moft ordinary Things) but it muft, or at leaft might put us in mind of Death? *Thou takeft away their Breath, they die, and return to their Duft*, fays the Pfalmift, *Pfalms* 104. 29. If there were but a Stop put to this continual breathing of ours, then our Life fhould be quickly

ly found to be but as a Vapour that goes up, and returns not again, *that appeareth for a little Time, and then evanisheth away*, as St. James says, Chap. 4. 14. So that we want not sufficient Occasions to put us in mind of Death; but alas! we want Heart and Affection to the Thing, and spiritual-mindedness to make use of these Occasions. Always we leave it on you, not only as a Duty, but as a very profitable Duty, to meditate more on Death, and to make use of these and the like Means to help you to it, and the Lord himself bless them to you.

A *Second Use* is for Reproof and Conviction; and O! what Ground of Reproof and Challenge does it bring along with it! Were this the very Time of our going to die, and of our Appearance before our Judge, how many of us can say, We have made Conscience of thinking on our last End? So that the LORD may expostulate with us as he did with his People of Old, *Deut. 32.* as with a foolish People and unwise, *O! that they were wise, O! that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End:* Many may sadly say, that they scarcely ever reckoned it among their Duties, nor the Neglect of it among their Sins and Grounds of Challenges; and we fear, which is yet worse, and more sad, that it may be said of many, that they do not resolve to rank and place it amongst their Duties; but if they will not be
pre-

prevailed with, to make it and mind it as your Duty, be assured it shall be your Sin, and ye shall have it for your Challenge: What have you not the Command of God enjoining it? Hath not the Saints practising of it so much some Weight with you? The Plainness of the Duty will make your Guilt the greater, and you the more inexcusable in your neglecting of it; there are none of us but we may go home with many Challenges, for our being so much intangled with the Things of this World, and for the Levity, Unstayedness, and Unsoberness, and Carnalness of our Spirits, which makes us think so little and speak so little of dying; and if any Thought of it occur now and then to our Minds, they sink not, they affect not, they leave not suitable Impressions. If you would essay it seriously you would find the Fruits of it, it should further Holiness, it should sober and compose you, and fit you for any Thing that may be coming in an ill Time, for doing and for suffering, as you shall be called to it, and for Death it self.

God himself give you so to essay it, as you may find the blessed Fruit and Advantage of it,



S E R M O N VII.

REVELATION CHAP. XIV. VER. 13.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD, &c.

SINCE Sin entred into the World, Death hath been one of the most terrible Things that the Children of Men have to meet with, even the most terrible of all terrible Things; and indeed 'tis no Wonder that they who know not of another and better Life to come, nor of the Way how to come at it, esteem so of it: It is called by *Job*, Chap. 18. 9. *The King of Terrors*: All other Terrors are but petty and inconsiderable in respect of this, and it is one of the believing Christian's great Privileges, that he is armed for Death, and that Death is disarmed as to him: Death is made a kindly Friend to the Believer, and the Terror of it is taken away; and that which the stoutest dare not, do not composedly look in the Face, though in a Fit of Manliness (as they call it, or rather of Desperateness, indeed some will endeavour to brave it out against Death, and to bear down the Terrors of it) the true Christian only through Faith in Christ is a Victor over,

over, even over his Enemy Death : The Scope of these Words, as we shewed, is,

That the LORD knowing how in these Calamities and Troubles that were coming, Death would be frequent, and that many of the Bodies of the Saints would go among the Rest, tho' their Death be very precious in his Sight : And knowing also how despicable their Death would be in the Eyes of the prophane World; and how that they would be accounted the only wise and happy Men that could best shift suffering for Christ, and for his Truth; and knowing withal how tempting this World would be to them, he permits this seasonable and sweet Word of Comfort, *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, &c.*

As if he had said, Let not Believers in Christ think much of Death, it will not mar their Happiness, but shall rather further and hasten it; so that this Word is given to strengthen and comfort the Godly against such an evil Time.

From which Ground we propose this.

Second Doctrine, That God hath fully furnished the Believer in him with Comfort and Encouragement against the terribleness of Death, so that tho' Death be terrible in itself, yet the Believer has good and sufficient Ground of Encouragement against it, and may quietly and comfortably die when God calls him where and how ever it shall be.

There is nothing in Death that needs to fear him,

him, the Word of God hath given him notable Grounds of Comfort and Encouragement to bear him through it most heartily, and in the Faith of that Word he should walk confidently and comfortably through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and fear no ill. There are two Things in this Doctrine much to the same Purpose;

1. That the LORD allows the Believer to be comforted in his Death, and therefore has allowed him Grounds of strong Consolation.

2. That the Believer who hath these Grounds, should make use of them to bear cheerfully and comfortably through Death; so the LORD speaking of Death and Judgment, *Luke 21. 28.* says to, and commands Believers in him, *When you shall see these Things come to pass, then look up and lift up your Heads, for the Day of your Redemption draweth nigh*; besides many other Commands that are frequent in the Scripture to this Purpose, and how many of the Saints, resting on and improving these Grounds, have died most willingly, pleasantly, comfortably and joyfully? Take for Instance old *Simeon*, who sweetly says, *Luke 2. Now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, &c.* He begs leave to be gone: And if ye look to *Paul*, O how earnestly does he long for his Pass and Dismission, and how heartily does he welcome the Thoughts of it, *Phil. 1. 21.* To clear the Doctrine a little, we shall speak somewhat to these Things, 1. What are the Things that ordinarily make Death terrible.

2. What

2. What are the Grounds of Comfort and Refreshing, or the refreshful Considerations that Believers have in the Way of Grace against these Grounds of Terror, and the latter will be found to be far greater than the former; only take this Word of Caution or Warning, that we speak not of Death so, as if it were comfortable to die simply, or as if it were so to all; no, not so, for 'tis terrible to all them that die in Sin, and out of CHRIST; but to them that believe in him, and take his own Way to this blessed End of dying in him; to all them, and to them only is Death comfortable and refreshing, and to none others.

But, 1. As to these Things that make Death terrible, and so much to be feared, they are especially these five.

1. There is something natural in Death that makes it terrible, and that is the Dissolution of that close and strait Union in Time, which is betwixt the Soul and the Body: Which Separation of these two great Intimates being contrary to Nature, cannot but be abhorrent and terrible to it; and Death withal in its large Extent, being a Part of the Fruit of the Curse, and a bitter Fruit of Man's Departure from God, 'tis no Wonder it be terrible.

2. There is something in Death that is penal, as it is the Wages of Sin (just now hinted) it has Challenges flowing from the Law with it, which speaks in the Conscience; this is the Fruit of Sin, and hath a Right with it to Dominion o-

ver

ver the Sinner flowing from the Breach of the Law of God, and were there no more than this in Death, it might make it terrible to all, Hence 'tis said, 1 Cor 15. 26. *That the Sting of Death is Sin*, because it were nothing to die if there were no Challenge for sin in it; *and the Strength of Sin is the Law*, because the Law *curseth every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in it to do them*, Gal. 3. 10. So that by this Means Death hath Dominion over all, and brings all, as in their natural Condition, under Wrath.

3. There is something that is accidental (if we may so speak) in Death, and that is, the Greatness and Grievousness of Pain that ordinarily takes hold of Men and Women, when Death as a King of Terrors draws near; and sometimes some other Circumstances concur to make it terrible; as namely, that it comes by such a Time very surprislingly, that it comes by such a Sort of Sicknefs, that it is loathsome, and somewhat thought Shame of, that it trylls the Person in such a Place, and among such a Company, and it may be at Distance from all Friends and Familiars

4. There is an Uncoüthness and Stangeness in the Thing that makes it terrible; the Man that now is dying, never died before, and none can tell him to the full or to the Life, what and how great a Thing it is to lay down his Life; a Thing which he never experienced before; for his Thoughts, Affections, Delights, Desires,

fires, and Designs are all much changed and altered from what they were; yea, that wherein he had Pleasure is possibly his Bane and Torment; his Thoughts of the World are quite another Thing than sometimes they were: It is then no Wonder that Folks fear, and be very fearful to adventure upon a Voyage, whereof none can give them a particular and exact Account as having sailed it before them, and with which they themselves have never been acquainted, and which hath such terrible Effects, especially where Faith in JESUS CHRIST is wanting.

Fifthly, That which accompanies and follows Death makes it terrible: If it were to go to the Dust as the Beast doth, it were nothing so terrible; but to have an immortal Soul that must appear before the tribunal of the great God, and must go through thê Hands of his holy severe Justice, where the least Sin will draw on Damnation, and where the Sentence that is once past is never to be revoked; O what a concerning and terrible Thing is that? And however while Men are in Health they think but little of it, yet it hath a broad Look at Death; nay, if you will consider Men as Men, much more as having some Light of the Gospel, ye would think it Matter of Admiration, that the serious Thoughts of what follows after Death doth not put them quite beside themselves, and fright them out of their Wits. However, to die carelessly, and without Satisfaction anent an Interest in Christ, is doubtless a most terrible Thing.

In

In the *Second Place*, if ye look to the Allowance that Believers have, and to their Grounds of Comfort against these Things that are terrible in Death; ye will find them to be far greater and stronger than they are terrible. For clearing whereof,

1. The Grounds of the Believer's Peace and Comfort in dying.

2. The Fruits that flow from these Grounds, which are exceeding refreshing and encouraging, and which you would carefully gather, and lay up against the Time of dying, and take such a way of living, as ye may have right to them when ye come to die.

First, Then for the Grounds of Believers Peace and Comfort, Consider these,

1. God's over-ruling Providence in the least Circumstance that concerns a Believer's Death, *Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints*, Psalm 116. 15. He looks on their Death as a Matter of special Concernment, the Time, the Sickness, the Kind of Death, whether a violent or natural, a lingering or sudden Death, are all determined and concluded with him; *I said*, says David, *Thou art my God, my Times are in thy Hand, deliver me from the Hand of mine Enemies*, Psalm 13. 15. His Interest in God sweetens all to him, and it also comforts him against the Persecutions of Enemies, that it was not in Mens Hands to put an End to his Life when they pleased, but in God's. *Secondly*, Consider our LORD JESUS CHRIST his special Commission in Reference to Death as he is Mediator, whom

whom God hath furnished with all Power in Heaven and in Earth; Therefore when *John* is afraid to die, Rev. 1. 10. he laid his Hand on him, and said unto him, *Fear not, I have the Keys of Hell and of Death.* The Godly need not be surpris'd with it, as if it could seize or take hold of them without Commission, for Death hath not the Keys of itself in keeping, but he bears them all; the World cannot take the bodily Life of a Saint from him, till he grant a Commission to that Effect: Is it not then very comfortable to be in such a blessed Estate, about which he doth in a special Manner order and command all? Most certainly it is.

A *Third* Ground of Consolation, is taken from our LORD's Satisfaction and Death, and this is a main one which hath many Grounds of Comfort in it, He died and was laid in the Grave: Hence,

First, He hath satisfied the Law, and taken away the Curse, 2 Cor. 5. Verse last, *He was made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* CHRIST hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us, Gal. 3. 13. *Blotting out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, and that was contrary to us, taking it out of the Way, and nailing it to his Cross; and having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a Shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it,* Col. 2. 14, 15. His Death is our Victory over Death, he disarmed the Devil by his dying, and became the Death

Death of Death, as it is *Hosea 13. 14. O Death, I will be thy Plagues, O Grave, I will be thy Destruction.* He by lying in the Grave, hath sweetened it to Believers, so that they need not fear to ly where he lay.

Secondly, His Resurrection completes the Consolation; it shews that Death is his Captive, that it prevailed not over him, but that he prevailed over it, and spoiled it of its Power; so that Believers may sweetly sing, *O Death, where is thy Sting! O Grave where is thy Victory! Thanks be to God who hath given us the Victory* through Christ's Resurrection; he hath satisfied for them and in their Room: This is the Ground of the Apostle's Triumph, *Rom, 8. 33. Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is GOD that justifies, who shall condemn? It is CHRIST that died, yea, rather that is risen again:* Let the Law, Justice, the Devil, and Sin come forth, they have no just Ground of Challenge or Plea against the Believer, for the Debt is paid, CHRIST is dead and risen, and hath got a Discharge, that is the Foundation of a Believer's Comfort, considering that CHRIST, died to prevent Right in any Party or Person to challenge or implead him.

Thirdly, His Intercession yet further completes the Consolations; for he hath not left the Believer to die his alone, nor to live his alone, but the Benefits of his Purchase are made forthcoming for him, according to his Prayer, *John 17. 24. And he is the same now in Heaven that he*
was

was on Earth) where he saith, *Father, I will that these whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory*: The Sum of his Intercession is to get Believers made Conquerors, and it is not fully satisfied until they be compleatly so; this is a very great Ground of Comfort, that when the Believer cannot pray for himself, and possibly his Senses fail and are gone, and the Prayers of others can be but little refreshing, that even then he is reached by the Benefit of CHRIST's Intercession.

A *Fourth* Ground, is the Consideration of God's Covenant, and of his Love and Faithfulness in keeping Covenant, even in and through Death; when *David*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. is about to comfort himself against Death (which seems to be his Scope in these Words) he draws his Comfort from this Ground, *That God had made with him an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure*. And the Covenant holds forth five Properties in God, that do most strongly comfort against Death.

First, The Love of God that is stronger than Death, for Death will never overcome it, but it overcomes Death. *Who shall separate us from the Love of God* (saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 38.) *Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, &c.* *Nay, in all these Things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us*: The Love of God gets the Victory, and gives the Believer Victory over all, not only in Life, but in

in Death, it being of infinite broad Extent, and of everlasting Duration.

2. His Faithfulness in his Covenant is plighted to the Believer, which Death takes not away; hence God is said to be the God, not of the Dead, but of the Living. Though *Abraham* be dead, yet is he his God still; the Covenant Relation is not dissolved, but as he is faithful in keeping Covenant to him while he is alive, so is he at Death, which is the prefixt Term for making all the Promises of the Covenant fully forthcoming, and for entering Believers in Possession of them.

A *Third* Property, is God's Wisdom in framing the Covenant so suitable, that it comforts not only in this Life, but at Death, therefore it is said to be *ordered in all Things*: The Promises of Grace and Mercy in the Covenant, are not only to give Pardon here along the Believer's Life, but assured Quietness at Death, even tho' Sense and Feeling be gone.

A *Fourth* Property is the Justice of God, which though it seem to be most terrible, yet it is comfortable to Believers against Death: *Henceforth there is laid up for me* (saith the Apostle, 2 Tim. 4. 8.) *a Crown of Righteousness, which God the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that Day.* For it is just with God to give to Believers what CHRIST hath bought and purchased at so dear a Rate for them, to give them Comfort who have betaken themselves to him for it; for though he gives nothing to Believers on the Account of their Merit,
yet

yet there is a Suitableness and Proportionableness by which he walks toward them, and without all Doubt Christ hath merited these great Things for them, which God in Justice is obliged to him to bestow on them,

The *Fifth* and last Property, is the Power of God which is engaged for the keeping of Believers to Salvation, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. He hath spoken the Word, and both can and will make it good; and there is nothing wherein his Power shineth forth more conspicuously, than their Supportance and Through-bearing in their Death, when Temptations are readily strongest.

A *Fifth* Ground is the begun Operation of the Spirit of God, considered either as his comfortable Work, as he is the Spirit of Adoption bearing witness with our Spirits, or as it is his sanctifying and mortifying Work, killing inward Lusts, or as it is his strengthening and quickning Work, whereby he keeps Life in the Believer, and gives him an Earnest of that which is coming; the more of these he hath, he may the more quietly and comfortably die, the Seed of God is in him, and is kept still alive in him: And now since God in his Providence, CHRIST in his Death, Resurrection, Intercession and Administration of his offices, God's Covenant and all his Properties with the Work of his Spirit, are all engaged for the Believer; what more can be required for his comfortable Through-bearing in Death? And yet all these are God's Allowance on him, even on every one that hath made

made his Peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST; are they not then, O! are they not blessed that die in the LORD?

In the *Second* Place, take some comfortable Considerations as so many Fruits that spring from these Grounds, or as so many Fruits of God's Love and everlasting Covenant.

First, God gives Charge to his Angels to attend on Believers at Death, for conveying their Souls to the Bosom of *Abraham*, *Luke 16*. For if Angels be ministring Spirits to page and wait on them in their Life, they are much more so at their Death: God is so tender of them, that he hath Angels more than one waiting on them.

And though this come not up the Length of the former Grounds of Comfort, springing more immediately from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, yet it is exceeding comfortable, when neither Minister nor Friend can comfort, that they have glorious Angels to be with them forever to convey them to Heaven, which is by them accounted an honourable Piece of Service.

Secondly, The present Happiness wherewith the Soul is possessed on the Back of Death (for it is immediately carried, as I said, to the Bosom of *Abraham*, or rather to the Bosom of JESUS CHRIST) take a Word of it in these two, which we spoke to more largely before.

First, They have a perfect Freedom from all Ills of this Life, no Sin, no Challenge, no Accusation, no Cross, no Difficulty, no Weight, all

I

Tears,

Tears are wiped away from their Eyes, Sorrow and Sighing flee away, they have absolute Freedom from all the Disquietness that is here.

Secondly, They are brought to the Possession of their Hope; they are brought to the immediate Enjoyment of GOD and of CHRIST as Men visible) they are furnished with all desirable Perfections, nothing is now in Part, all is perfect; they are perfect in Knowledge, they have a clear Resolution to all their Doubts and uncertain Things which we dispute long about here with much Contention, and seldom come to a clearly satisfying close; a Glance of GOD and of CHRIST fully satisfieth all these: There is an Admission to all the Privileges of Heaven, a Place given among them that stand by, a sitting on Thrones with *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David*, and with the Rest of the Prophets, with *Paul, James* and *John*, and the rest of the Apostles, where they behold the Face of GOD, and of the Lamb, and are among his Attendants serving him always without any Weariness, weight or Burden, without any Difficulty or Indisposition; and blessing and praising him for ever; and is not this a most heartsome and comfortable Life and Lot? May not a Believer then yield to Death, yea, and make it very welcome on this Ground? Considering what a miserable World he lived in, and how eminently, abundantly, and superexcellently all the vain and evanishing Shadows
and

and Shews hereaway are made up by what is most real, solid, sober, substantial, satisfying and abiding there.

There is, *Thirdly*, the Resurrection of Believers Bodies; though this Tabernacle be dissolved and go to Dust, yet up again it must, and that Part of *Isaiah* his Song, Chap. 26. is then eminently verified, *Thy dead Men shall live, together with my Body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the Dust; for their Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, and the Earth shall cast out the Dead*: As in Winter the Herbs are not seen, yet the Roots remain in the Ground, and they rise again in the Spring; so (Faith resting on the Word of Promise) shall the Bodies of the Godly, and these that ly down mortal rise immortal, having Agility and Aptitude to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. These Bodies that were sown in Corruption and Dishonour, and which after a while lying in the Ground become very loathsome, shall be raised in Incorruption and Glory, even conform to the glorious Body of JESUS CHRIST; these Bodies that were sown in Weakness, even such Weakness that they could not go on their own Feet to the Grave, nay, they were without all Life, Motion, Sense and Feeling, shall be raised in Power, as you may see at greater Length, in these excellent, sweet and comfortable Words of the Apostle, *1 Cor. 15.* wherein not only he clears the great Truth of the Resurrection, but also shews what Grounds of Comfort himself and other Believers had against Death in it.

Fourthly, and lastly, Consider what will be the Soul's and the Body's Case when that desirable Day of the Resurrection comes, when these two old Intimates shall meet together, and as it were renew their Acquaintance again in a much better Condition than they parted, there will be no more a Wrestling thenceforth betwixt Flesh and Spirit, but an holy Harmony in an unite and joint enjoying of God, and in an unite and joint delighting in serving of God, and in an unite and joint Satisfaction in God, and in being with God for evermore, *For we shall be ever with the LORD*, saith the Apostle, *1 Thess. 4.* Wherefore, saith he, *comfort one another with these Words*; and indeed there is good and none such Ground to do so: Consider withal the great Honour they will have at Judgment, and the Happiness following it. To return then to what we proposed, seeing Believers in CHRIST have such pregnant impregnable Grounds to comfort them against Death, and seeing such sweet and surpassing excellent Fruits flow from these Grounds, and since there is such a begun Good at Death that hath no End, may they not be very quiet in their Life and at their Death, and be exceedingly comforted, whatever be the Time, Place or Manner, that God in his Wisdom shall think fit to call them by Death, out of this present evil World.

We come now to the Uses of this sweet Point of Doctrine: And the first Use is of Exhortation to Believers.

1. To

1. To lay up this Comfort. And,

2dly, To bless God for this comfort, that he hath provided so very well for you, both in this Life, and at, and after your Death.

3dly. Bless him that ever he was graciously pleased to bring you to this happy Condition, when he might have left you altogether comfortless both in Life and Death: O bless him that he hath given his Son JESUS CHRIST, that he is come, and that Grace is thro' him extended that broad, as to take you in. It should make you cry with holy *David* in a Transport of Admiration, *What am I, and what is my Father's House, that thou hast brought me hitherto: 2 Sam. 7* And with him to say, *I bless the Lord that hath given me Counsel, Psalm 16.*

But, *Secondly*, There are two Uses we would speak more particularly to.

The *First* whereof, is, to exhort you to that which is the Sum of all we have spoken to you from these Words, even to study to live so as you may die in CHRIST; which Death hath so many and so strong Grounds of Consolation, waiting it, that all the World cannot possibly parallel or equal them. If there were not another Motive to press you to Faith in CHRIST, and to Mortification, and to the making of your Calling and Election sure, this is sufficient, that these Things have such Comfort at Death, and against it, which are the most uncontrovertible, sure, stable and lasting Grounds of Comfort; other Grounds of Comfort that go quite dry, and e-

vanish at Death, are but miserable Comforters, and like *Job's* Winter brooks of Water, that in Summer disappoint the weary Traveller, and send him away ashamed; but these Comforts can guard the Heart against the Law, against Challenges for Sin, and against the Devil: Nay, let us suppose that there were Millions of Devils, and of Challenges for Sin, and of Laws transgressed thereby to speak and pass Sentence against the Believer in CHRIST, there is mighty and merrellous Ground of Comfort for him against them all here, he may appear and appeal, and confidently say, *There are more with me than against me*; Death to him wants its Sting, and Sin its Strength, and he may step over the Bound-road (to say so) and Border of Time into Eternity with a Song of Praise and Triumph in his Mouth, and ly as quietly and confidently, as if he were to ly down in his Bed, as it is, *Iſa. 75. 1. 2.* yea, with a great Deal more Quietness, Confidence and cheerfulness: Therefore were you to choose a Way of living, let it be this, ev'n to live so, as you may die in CHRIST; this is, as I said, the great Scope of all that we have spoken from these Words, even to stir you up to live so, as you may be happy at your Death, and that is to die in him. I shall propose but one Consideration to enforce this upon you, and it is this, That the Way of living and dying hath with it an Alteration of the Nature of all Things. When a Man is an Enemy to God, all Things are accursed to him, but when
he

he is befriended of God and in good Terms with him, all Things are blessed to him, and work together for his Good, *Rom. 8. 28.* and Death comes in among all these Things. *All Things are yours*, saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 3.* at the Close, *whether Paul, or Cephas, Life or Death, Things present, or Things to come*, they are all at your Service, they are all yours as to the blest Use of them, they work together for your Good, and prove contributive and subservient to your bringing to Glory.

The *Second Use* on the other Hand, is, to let all of you see what great Prejudice you suffer, and what Disadvantage you lie under, that live not as you may die in CHRIST; you have nothing to do with any of the least of all these Consolations; and therefore in the Name of the LORD, you are inhibited and discharged to meddle with them; see that none of you who resolve not to rest on CHRIST by Faith, to live holily, and to shew forth his Praise by a shining and exemplary Conversation, dare presume to put forth your Hand to touch these Consolations; that terrible Word in the 7. of *Jeremiah* calls for your Consideration, *Will ye steal, murder, and commit Adultery, and swear falsely, and come and stand before me in this House, and say, We are delivered to do all these Abominations?* Will you take your own Way of profane living, and yet expect any Benefit of my Covenant, or any saving Fruit of my Grace: As
God

GOD reckoneth with profane *Israel*, so shall he reckon with you, and shall separate you from his People under a Curse, and the Anger of GOD shall smoke against you; not one graceless Sinner shall be permitted to join himself with, or lurk amongst the great Company and Congregation of these Godly: Angels shall separate you from them, and the Sentence of the Judge shall separate you from him and them, with that doleful, *Depart from me, ye Workers of Iniquity*; and that Sentence will be as terrible to you, as the Godly's Sentence will be comfortable to them, *Come ye Blessed of my Father*, &c. Take notice of this, all ye that think ye would fain die well (and no marvel, for so did prophane *Balaam* desire to die the Death of the Righteous) but have no Care to live well; when all this Doctrine is summed up, it will draw your Happiness on this very Thing, and bring it to this Issue, Whether you will indeed in the LORD's Strength set yourselves to live so, as you may die in CHRIST, then in this Case, all these Consolations, even all the Consolations of the Gospel will be yours, but not one of them all is yours otherwise: To them that die in the LORD, and to them only is Happiness promised: But, on the contrary, to all them that live not to him, and die not in him, GOD is an Enemy in Life and in Death; his Curse follows them here, and cleaves close to them as a Girdle doth to the Loins of a Man in the Grave,
so

so that they shall never be able to shake it off. Sins and Challenges shall then be multiplied; Death shall then put forth its Sting, and Sin its Strength; the Grave shall then obtain full Victory over them, as it hath over the Wicked that die in their Sins, and out of CHRIST; Death and the Curse make a Morsel, as it were, of all that live and die out of CHRIST, it eats them up, and consumes them for evermore; when the first Death is over and gone, the second Death takes hold of them, and never lets go its hold; so that Death will still, even through all Eternity pursue the Quarrel against them, and therefore let me shut up all with two Words.

The *First* whereof is to you who make Conscience of being and living in CHRIST, though ye come short of that which ye much covet and long to be at, and is called for from you, which is your Burden and Affliction: Yet consider what a comfortable Allowance ye have from GOD, who is the GOD of all Consolation, and be comforted in it, whatever be your Lot and Condition in the World, be what it will, or may be, a little Time will put it by, and to an End: Therefore, I say, take Encouragement from these Grounds of Consolation that GOD hath given you against the Terribleness of Death, and work so as you may not mar your own Comfort; and withal, bless GOD who hath given you such good Ground of Hope; ye have more to make a truly comfortable Life to you than
all

all the Kings and great Men in the Earth have that are out of CHRIST. Ye may be very sinfully defective in this much call'd for Duty of blessing God, who hath provided so notably well for you, and may rob him of the Glory that is infinitely due to GOD from you, on many, O! very many Account, if ye look not to it.

The *Second* Word is to all you whom we would earnestly beseech, for the LORD's Sake, and as ye prize these Mercies, to take the Way that GOD hath chalked out to come by them: Dying in the LORD is the great Qualification that hath all these Qualifications annexed to it, and living in, and to him, is the indispensable requisite Qualification of all that would die in him, and that is, to *live by Faith in the Son of God*, and to live in CHRIST; to live so, as CHRIST may live in you, and ye may live in him, that the Truth and the Strainness of your Union with him may be evident and apparent by the Fruits of it; in a Word, to live in continual Communion with him, and in the close and constant Pursuit of Conformity to him. We will dare to say to you that live so, yea, to all of your Condition, if ye will through Grace chuse the Way of living, that ye shall die happy, for the Mouth of the LORD hath spoken it, and will make it good, *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*. He hath pronounced Blessedness on such in Death and after Death. And upon the other Hand, if ye will betake yourselves to the Way
of

of the most Part, and live carnally and carelessly, and will not think more on Death, and will do no more to prepare and make ready for it, alas ! we must say to you, and the LORD will ratify and confirm it, that ye have nothing to do with the Comforts of his People, nor have any Part or Portion in them; and if so, what have ye to comfort yourselves in, though ye were all Kings and Queens of the most opulent, potent and flourishing Kingdoms of the World? God will say to you, That ye had nothing to do to take his Covenant in your Mouths, since ye hated to be reformed. And though, poor Wretches, ye now live in carnal Mirth and jovialty, yet your Laughter and Joy, your singing and dancing shall by and by be turned into mourning, into weeping and wailing and gnashing of Teeth; as your Mirth and Laughter shall end, your Weeping and Howling shall begin, but never end. Is there not then, O ! is there not great, vastly great Difference, betwixt dying in Sin and dying in CHRIST? And all this depends on your Way of living: And is there not a Necessity of your being in him, and of your living in him, and to him as you would not to your eternal Prejudice and Loss, be found mistaking, or not duly considering these Things that belong to your Peace, till this your Day be over and gone, and Matters betwixt him and you be past all ridding and Remedy.

Now the LORD himself, who can only do it,
power-

powerfully persuade and prevail with you, so
to live, that you may have the well grounded
Hope of dying in CHRIST, since *blessed*, and on-
ly blessed are they *who die in the Lord*, who rest
from their Labours, and their Works follow them.

F I N I S.



t, so
nded
on-
rest
hem.